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A WORD TO THE WISE.

A

# WORD TO THE WISE,

A

# COMEDY.

AS IT WAS PERFORMED

AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, in DRURY-LANE.

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WRITTEN BY HUGH KELLY,
OF THE MIDDLE-TEMPLE,
AUTHOR of FALSE DELICACY.

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LONDON,
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,
AND SOLD BY
J. DODSLEY, IN PALL-MALL; J. AND E. DILLY, IN THE POULTRY; G. KEARSLY, IN LUDGATE-STREET; AND T. CADELL, IN THE STRAND.
MDCCLXX.

149822
May 1873

## ERRATA.

Prologue line 18, for *face*, read *ace*.

——— l. 19, for *crowed*, r. *crowded*.

Addreſs page vi. laſt line but two, omit *this*.

——— p. xii. l. 14, omit *in*.

——— p. xii. l. 37, for *April*, r. *March*.

——— p. xiv. laſt line, for *truthleſs*, r. *ruthleſs*.

——— p. xix. l. 7, for *themſelves*, r. *yourſelves*.

Epilogue l. 9, for *regents*, r. *tenants*.

# AN

# ADDRESS to the PUBLIC.

THE comedy here offered to the world, having been baniſhed from the theatre, through the rage of political prejudice, and the author having, through that prejudice, been no leſs attacked in his reputation than wounded in his fortune, it becomes neceſſary for him to juſtify his character as a man, however poor his abilities may be as a writer. — Popular reſentment has had it's victim, and the ſacrifice being now over, perhaps a few words may be heard in his defence.

For a conſiderable time, previous to the exhibition of the following ſcenes, two charges were induſtriouſly propagated againſt the author; and to theſe charges the unexampled ſeverity exerciſed on his play may be wholly attributed: The firſt was, that Mr. Kelly proſtituted the Public Ledger, a daily paper then under his direction, to the purpoſes of adminiſtration, in conſequence of an annual penſion he received; and, inſtead of conducting it upon principles of impartiality, would admit no letters whatever, unleſs profeſſedly written in favour of government. — This accuſation, though conſtantly rendered abſurd by his readineſs to inſert every proper letter on each ſide of every public ſubject, gained no little credit, but gained it intirely among thoſe who would not be at the trouble of examining into the truth. — At length the calumny grew ſerious enough to demand ſome notice, and accordingly, on the 14th of February, 1769, the following reply was publiſhed in the Ledger, to a freſh attack by an anonymous correſpondent upon the independency of that paper.

" We can aſſure this gentleman (meaning the correſpon-
" dent) that we have never ſuppreſſed any thing in favour of
" Mr. Wilkes's cauſe, which was in the leaſt proper for pub-
" lication: But declare on the contrary, that we always *have*
" been and always *ſhall* be as ready to inſert the productions
" of his friends, as the letters of his enemies. — Many pieces
" on *both* ſides have reached us, which we were under a ne-
" ceſſity of rejecting, becauſe they were too dangerous, or too
" abſurd for admittance: yet we can with great truth aver,
" that we ſtrictly keep to our title, and maintain the moſt diſ-
" paſſionate impartiality, — we profeſs *ourſelves open to all*

 *parties,*

" *parties*, and cannot conſiſtently with this profeſſion refuſe " *any* performance which ſeems dictated by a ſpirit of candour, or an appearance of rational argument. Our correſpondent, therefore, before he calls us *partial*, ſhould really *prove* us ſo; and ſhould firſt of all favour us with his eſſays in *defence* of Mr. Wilkes, before he pronounces poſitively, that we will *not* indulge them with a *place*.

" In fact, a paper to maintain a *real* impartiality, muſt be actuated by the principles of *juſtice*, not by the fear of *cenſure* on the one hand, nor the hope of *approbation* on the other; and the conductors of it muſt be more ſolicitous to *deſerve* the applauſe of their readers, than to *obtain* it. — Had the managers of the Ledger for inſtance, rejected any piece which came *againſt* the cauſe of Mr. Wilkes, through an apprehenſion of incurring the popular diſpleaſure, they would have violated the aſſurance of *impartiality*, which they have ſo ſolemnly given to the public, and the opponents of that gentleman, would have a reaſonable plea to reproach them with their palpable breach of faith. To accuſe them conſequently of *partiality*, argues a *partiality* in their accuſers; and it is rather unfair in thoſe, to deny others a liberty of ſpeaking upon national affairs, who conſtantly lay claim to ſuch a privilege themſelves,

" Theſe gentlemen muſt however remember, that, though the Ledger is *open* to all parties, it is influenced by *none*: And that the conductors, to *merit* the good opinion of *all*, muſt no more make a ſacrifice of their juſtice at the ſhrine of *popularity*, than at the altar of *government*: they can therefore only repeat, that the advocates for Mr. Wilkes, will always be as acceptable to them, as any other correſpondents, and they *call* upon his friends in this manner, to favour them with productions in his defence. What more can be deſired at their hands? If the popular writers decline this candid invitation, the editors of the Ledger are intirely free from blame. They have bound themſelves in a promiſe of undeviating impartiality to the *whole* public, and muſt by no means act inequitably to thoſe who *do* oblige them with pieces for inſertion, out of an unreaſonable deference for thoſe who do *not*."

This advertiſement Mr. Kelly flattered himſelf would effectually undeceive the public; but here he was unhappily diſappointed. Many who had repeatedly heard the charge againſt him, never once honoured the defence with a peruſal; while many more who really read it, conſidered the very candour of it's declaration as a proof of criminality, and would not allow any weight to the argument of *juſtice*, when oppoſed to what they looked upon as the cauſe of the people. — Mr. Kelly, however, determined, at all

all events, to do his duty, conducted the Ledger on it's cuſtomary plan of *impartiality*, and many of the moſt popular gentlemen who have arraigned his conduct in the capacity of a public editor, well know that their letters, inſtead of being rejected, have been frequently inſerted at the warning of an hour. — Beſides, a review of the Ledger during Mr. Kelly's ſuperintendency, will convince the moſt incredulous, that the ſevereſt animadverſions were admitted on the proceedings of adminiſtration. — It was not Mr. Kelly's fault if the publications on the contrary ſide were the moſt numerous. — The correſpondents of a news-paper will make it what they pleaſe, and the editor is not to conſider in whoſe favour they write, but whether their writings are proper for inſertion. — Whatever Mr. Kelly's own ſentiments might be on political affairs, this was the only object of his inquiry: and it will appear, on a retroſpection of the pieces printed, while he directed the Ledger, that Mr. Kelly has frequently complimented popular writers on account of their abilities, and civilly requeſted a continuation of their correſpondence. — As to Mr. Kelly's own letters in the Ledger, they appeared but occaſionally, from the number of volunteers who eagerly crowded to the general ſervice: Yet he will candidly confeſs, that when they did appear, they were not always in favour of popularity. This conſtitutes the ſecond charge againſt him; and as he is above the deſpicable littleneſs of prevaricating, he will enter with confidence, andhe hopes with decency, upon his juſtification.

Whether it has been Mr. Kelly's merit or demerit, to think from principle unpopularly, on the ſubject of the preſent unhappy diſſenſions, he will not pretend to ſay, but certainly it has been his misfortune; and though ſeveral of his diſcreeter friends repeatedly warned him of the danger his next piece would run on the ſtage, from an open declaration of his political opinions; ſtill he did not imagine, that his profeſſion as a public writer was to deprive him of his independence as a man —As he never preſumed to be offended with the ſentiments of others on matters of a national tendency, he claimed a right of expreſſing his own; and did not ſuppoſe his literary character, precluded him from ſpeaking upon a point which was the continual object of literary inveſtigation. — Beſides this, he little conceived that the advocates for freedom of thinking, would be the firſt to manacle the mind; that the profeſſed friends of candour would be the firſt to condemn without a hearing; and the avowed enemies of oppreſſion be the only perſons ready to exerciſe an unwarrantable ſeverity — He had at leaſt a right to juſtice, if he had no pretence to favour, and merited ſurely a trial, though he might afterwards deſerve to be condemned.——

The heated hour of prejudice however, is not the hour of ſober reflection; at ſuch a ſeaſon the very virtues of our hearts frequently lead us into miſtakes; and we run into exceſſes which our cooler reaſon muſt diſapprove, from an actual rectitude of intention. This was the caſe of numbers who oppoſed the exhibition of Mr. Kelly's play: they had been told he was a deſpicable mercenary, hired to write away their liberties, and therefore conſidered him as a very improper candidate for public approbation — they had been informed, that at the memorable trials of Mr. Gillam, and of the ſoldier at Guildford, in conſequence of the unhappy affair in St. George's fields, he had ſtood forth an advocate for the effuſion of innocent blood; of courſe they beheld him with deteſtation; and their motive was really reſpectable, though their reſentment was wholly excited by miſinformation or miſtake.

It is true indeed Mr. Kelly, as well as an account of the two remarkable trials juſt mentioned, wrote, during the courſe of our domeſtic diſunion, many other papers in ſupport of government, and in vindication of parliament; but he never exerciſed his trifling pen where he did not ſuppoſe both to be right, nor delivered a ſingle ſentence that was not the reſult of his ampleſt conviction. — With regard to the two trials, he repreſented them as they really *were*, not as they might be *wiſhed* in print, by the *over* zealous advocates of freedom. — And ſo far was he from being once employed, ſince his exiſtence, by adminiſtration, to exert his poor abilities in their cauſe, that he here proteſts, before the public, he never *expected* or *received* the ſmalleſt emolument for his little ſervices. — Never was *directly* or *indirectly* connected with a miniſter in his days, nor has he even at this moment, though ſuffering ſo ſeverely on account of his attachment to government, either *ſolicited* or *received* a ſhilling compenſation for that bread, which he and his family have loſt in it's defence.

HERE poſſibly Mr. Kelly may be aſked, how, "unplac'd, un-"penſion'd, no man's heir or ſlave," he could be idle enough to riſk the favour of a town, that had honoured him with the warmeſt marks of approbation in his firſt dramatic attempt, for the mere purpoſe of ſerving a government from which he had not received the minuteſt favour or protection? To this Mr. Kelly replies, that in ſerving government, where he thought it *ought* to be ſerved, he looked upon himſelf as rendering very eſſential benefit to the community. — Knowing it the duty of every good ſubject to promote, inſtead of diſturbing, the national tranquility, he uſed this his humble endeavours, rather to extinguiſh than animate the torch of public diſcord, and ſtrove, as far as ſo inſignificant an individual

dividual could ſtrive, to wreſt it from the hand of every political enthuſiaſt, who madly attempted to ſet his country in flames. With this view he particularly gave an account of the two trials that have expoſed him to ſo much unmerited obloquy. Being well convinced, that, during the rage of party, truth would undergo a torture upon the wheel of prejudice, Mr. Kelly, determined to give a faithful narrative of theſe remarkable deciſions. He accordingly attended; he accordingly gave a real ſtate of both to the world; and though he has been calumniated in the groſs, as a ſhameleſs abettor of murder, no attempt has hitherto been made to point out, in his repreſentation, the ſmalleſt perverſion of a fact. — This was eaſy to be done, had he been employed as the verniſher of guilt; the trials were not carried on in ſecret, but in the full face of day; not ſolely before the retainers of a court, but before the warmeſt ſons of popularity: Mr. Kelly was not culpable if the priſoners were wholly without blame; he only acquitted thoſe in his relation, who were acquitted by the laws of their country, and only explained *how* that innocence was made apparent, which the *too* deciſſive voice of partiality had previouſly condemned.

Mr. Kelly's account of the trials was received with general ſurprize, becauſe the public, by a ſucceſſion of papers in the daily and other prints, had been taught to conſider Mr. Gillam and the ſoldier unqueſtionably guilty. — On their acquittal therefore the *intemperate* friends to the popular cauſe, (Mr. Kelly ſays the *intemperate* friends, becauſe he knows many of the moſt rational, as well as the moſt worthy members of the community, from *principle* in oppoſition,) wiſhed to throw a ſtigma on the court, where they were tried, and wiſhed to prejudice the world with an opinion, that both owed their preſervation more to the dexterity of judicial chicane, than to their real innocence. — Mr. Kelly, however, by ſetting the tranſactions in a plain, an honeſt light, prevented the intended inſult to the courts, but drew the whole weight of party reſentment upon himſelf, and the doctrine having been long ſucceſsfully inculcated among the people, that whoever ſpoke, much leſs whoever wrote, againſt popular prejudices, muſt neceſſarily be the hireling of government, Mr. Kelly became gradually ſtigmatized into ſuch a portion of politcal conſequence, that the ſuppreſſion of his comedy was conſidered as a triumph over adminiſtration; ſo that the curtain was no ſooner raiſed on the firſt night than a loud hiſſing prevented the performersfrom beginning the play a conſiderable time; — while on the other hand, the plaudits of Mr. Kelly's numerous friends, to whoſe goodneſs he ſtands eternally indebted, as well as of the unprejudiced, who deſired to give him a fair hearing, and afterwards to expreſs their cenſure or approbation, rendered the confuſion general. At laſt the performance commenced

menced — but went on with inceſſant interruptions, except only in the third act, to the concluſion. The performers totally diſconcerted by the tumult, were unable to exerciſe their abilities, or to remember their parts — whole ſpeeches, eſſentially neceſſary to the conduct of the fable, were left out, and others mutilated for the ſake of brevity. — In ſhort, the ſole conſideration was to get the comedy through the five acts in *any manner*. — This, with much difficulty, was effected, and it was given out for the following Monday. A new conteſt now aroſe: the oppoſers of the play inſiſted, with an uncuſtomary ſeverity, that it ſhould never be exhibited again. — The ſupporters inſiſted that it ſhould, on the Monday, according to the public intimation from Mr. King; but Mr. Kelly, fearing the conſequences of a diſpute that appeared extremely ſerious, propoſed behind the ſcenes, to withdraw his piece at once, for the ſake of reſtoring peace, and the tragedy of Cymbeline was given out in it's room.

This conciliating meaſure, however, was not attended with the deſired effect. The friends of the play, who were greatly the majority, would by no means admit the comedy to be withdrawn; and, after the farce, above two hundred gentlemen calling out for the manager, and threatening immediate demolition, to the houſe, if A WORD to the WISE was not performed, as originally given out, Mr. Lacy, the only manager then in town, ſent Mr. Hopkins, the prompter, to aſſure the company it ſhould, and all terminated peaceably for that evening.

It was no difficult matter to foreſee that the theatre, on the ſucceeding Monday night, would be a ſcene of freſh tumult; and the conſequences appearing more and more alarming to Mr. Kelly, he went to Mr. Garrick, who came to town on the Sunday morning, to conſult with him on the beſt means of preſerving peace, and it was concluded, that Mr. Kelly ſhould wait on his friends, and requeſt that they would give up the point. — Mr. Kelly accordingly did ſo, obſerving, that the intereſts of a ſingle individual were of little conſideration, when weighed againſt the repoſe of a whole public. — He obſerved, as he has repeatedly done in the courſe of the preſent narrative, that prejudices had been ſtrongly propagated againſt him, and that the very ſeverity he had experienced from many of his enemies, though unjuſtifiable in the manner, yet in the motive was really laudable. The moment of party heat, he frequently added, was not the moment to reaſon; and that however he might be injured in his circumſtances, by the ſuppreſſion of his play, he would ſuffer the injury with pleaſure, if he could by any means reſtore the tranquility of the town, which he had ſo unhappily, though ſo innocently, diſturbed. — To this his friends replied, that the cauſe was not his cauſe now, but

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the public's; that if party diſputes were once introduced into the theatre, our moſt rational amuſements muſt be quickly at an end, that the number of writers at preſent for the ſtage was ſufficiently ſmall, and that they would not ſuffer the town to be controuled in it's pleaſures from private pique or perſonal reſentment: all they contended for was a fair hearing for the piece; that if it deſerved condemnation, they themſelves would be the firſt to give it up; but, till it received an equitable trial, they would not allow a triumph to prejudice profeſſed, and acknowledged partiality.

In this ſtate the affair reſted till the Monday evening, when, on Mr. King's appearance, to ſpeak the prologue, the oppoſition, with increaſed numbers, hiſſed, cat-called, and threw oranges: on the other ſide the demand for the new play was equally violent, the ſupporters turned ſeveral out of the houſe, whom they conſidered as general diſturbers; however Mr. Garrick went on, in the author's name, with a formal renunciation of every emolument, of every reputation ariſing from his ſmall endeavours for the public amuſement; adding, that he was not only ready, but deſirous to concur with their pleaſure, though to the total diſappointment both of his wiſhes and intereſt, and begged the ſacrifice he then ſo chearfully offered might be allowed to terminate the contention. Things nevertheleſs continued in the ſame confuſion for a conſiderable time, — during which Mr. Garrick often retired and returned, — but at laſt advanced with a paper in his hand, from Mr. Kelly, containing a written repetition of the foregoing requeſt, and deſiring permiſſion, as the only means of re-eſtabliſhing harmony, to withdraw his comedy wholly from the theatre.

When Mr. Garrick attempted to read this paper, a demand was made from the gallery, to know whether it was a political production, but though the demand occaſioned no little laughter among the oppoſers of the piece, it only augmented the ſpirit of the author's friends, by rendering the views of party ſtill more and more viſible. — The play of Cymbeline being loudly inſiſted upon on the one hand, was loudly prohibited on the other; and near three hours having paſſed in acts of annoyance and hoſtility, Mr. Kelly was ſo exceedingly alarmed for the event, that he came himſelf into the front boxes, and from the front boxes, on the galleries calling out they could not ſee him, into the pit, and there, turning towards the audience, he expreſſed his apprehenſions for their ſafety, begged they would be ſatisfied with what he had done, which was all he had in his power to do for their preſervation, and not, by injuring one another, wound him irreparably in his peace.

Though in no degree ſo ſucceſsful as he wiſhed, he nevertheleſs ſo far prevailed, that a propoſition on his

 ſecuring

retiring was ſuggeſted for Falſe Delicacy to be given the enſuing night, for his benefit by way of compromiſe: a gentleman then ſtood up in the pit, and aſked Mr. Garrick, whether conſenting to theſe meaſures would, or would not, be an impediment to Mr. Kelly's bringing any future productions on the ſtage — to which that gentleman had no ſooner given a negative, than a ſecond perſon from the gallery cried out, Expulſion means incapacitation. Mr. Kelly, acquainted with theſe particulars, went to Mr. Garrick and declined the favour intended him — obſerving, that he by no means meant to wring a benefit from the charity of the public — that if he deſerved one benefit he was intitled to three, and that the theatre had already ſuſtained ſufficient loſs upon his account. — But Mr. Garrick generouſly told him, that the theatre was much the beſt able to bear a loſs; though, ſuppoſing the caſe otherwiſe, neither he nor Mr. Kelly, as public men, had a right on that occaſion to diſpute a determination of the public. Here the matter reſted for that night, as there was no play, the money was returned, and the audience retired ſeemingly well reconciled.

Notwithſtanding the compromiſe of the foregoing evening, and notwithſtanding Mr. Kelly deſired that the play-bills ſhould contain no intimation that the performance of Falſe Delicacy was intended for his benefit, a report univerſally prevailed that the oppoſition were determined not to ſuffer the exhibition of Falſe Delicacy, which had long been honoured with the approbation of all parties, merely becauſe it was written by the author of a Word to the Wiſe. Mr. Kelly on this, imagining that the circumſtance of his being to receive the profits, of the night, and not any objection which could be raiſed to an eſtabliſhed comedy, muſt be the ſole foundation of this freſh reſentment, waited upon his friends and begged they would allow him to relinquiſh his title to theſe profits ſince they were ſo likely to renew the diſturbances of the theatre. His friends however were for a long time inflexible — they pronounced a violation of the compromiſe, no leſs injurious to the public, than inſulting to them, and added, that they would never have liſtened to any compromiſe, if he had not been ſo importunately ſolicitous to give up every thing for peace —— but Mr. Kelly repreſenting the prejudice the managers muſt neceſſarily ſuſtain, by a contention of the preſent nature between the public, and pointing out the prejudice alſo which every individual belonging to the play-houſe muſt as neceſſarily ſuſtain, by an interruption of the cuſtomary buſineſs — his friends yielded to theſe arguments, and permitted Mr. Kelly to forego the advantages of the night, to

prevent the managers and the performers from suffering in a dispute, where it was equally their interest and their duty to consult the wishes of the auditors.

These precautions being taken by Mr. Kelly, he repaired to the theatre on the Tuesday evening with some degree of satisfaction; but, on the opening of the play the confusion was as violent as ever, though Mr. Garrick, from Mr. Kelly, assured the opposition, that the play was not to be performed for the benefit of the author — This assurance however was by no means sufficient; the comedy of False Delicacy was written by Mr. Kelly, and therefore though in possession of the stage among the number of stock plays, was now to be condemned — to effect this purpose, an uproar in the theatre was not only judged necessary, but the following hand bill was distributed at all the doors.

To the PUBLIC.

"YOU cannot be ignorant that one wretch in that infamous banditti, hired by administration to explain away the rights of an insulted people, is the author of a *Word to the Wise*. As a comic writer, his universal want of abilities has rendered him contemptible. As a politician, his principles are detestable. For these united reasons, you were pleased to forbid the representation of his play on Saturday, and prevent it's performance last night.

"The author himself begged leave to withdraw it: yet his party are now determined, that you shall support the writer, though you reject the play. This night's representation is for his *benefit*. Shall he with impunity assume a power repugnant to your own? —— If the priviledge of managers be imposition, the duty of an English audience must be obedience."

Tuesday, March 6, 1770.

The heat with which proceedings were thus conducted on the part of opposition, gave room to imagine, that the audience would, as upon the preceding night, be dismissed without any play. — But Mr. Kelly's friends were now no longer able to suppress their indignation, and being determined to make no farther concessions, they exerted themselves so effectually, that False Delicacy was performed, though with very considerable interruption. — Whole speeches, nay, whole scenes were obliged to be omitted, and such was the rage of undistinguishing prejudice, that it even attacked the personal safety of the female performers — This was not all, when the attempt to suppress False Delicacy proved abortive, the enemies of the author demanded their money, and appeared

unwilling to pay for the miſchief they really *did*, becauſe, they had not effected as much as they actually *wiſhed* to *do*.

The concluſion of the farce happily produced a general calm, and though the theatrical horizon ſeemed pregnant with a ſtorm the ſucceeding evening, it's ſerenity ſtill continued, and perhaps, will never be again diſturbed by any of Mr. Kelly's productions. There is nothing more neceſſary to add with regard to the exhibition of *A Word to the Wiſe*, than that ſuch was the judicious conduct of Mr. Garrick and Mr. King, that what they gained on the one hand, they never loſt on the other, — for, as the amuſement of the public had in the firſt inſtance been the only object of their attention, ſo it was apparent the public tranquility was, in the ſecond, the only object of their care: And in whatever inconveniences they themſelves might be expoſed to, they were incapable of deviating from the rules of politeneſs, of good ſenſe, and manly condeſcenſion.

After a ſacrifice of his intereſt, ſo ample, ſo unreſerved, for the ſake of reſtoring tranquility in the theatre, it might perhaps be expected that Mr. Kelly's enemies would have thought themſelves ſufficiently gratified; but prejudice has many appetites to glut, and we ſeldom liſten to the ſentiments of juſtice, where we have publicly committed a violence upon our reaſon. — It was therefore no way wonderful, though his cauſe was the common cauſe of letters, to find many of the periodical prints conſtantly filled with the groſſeſt ſcurrilities againſt him; but, in this they rather gratified his pride, than wounded his ſenſibility; they only exalted him on the roll of ſlander, among the moſt illuſtrious characters in the kingdom, and made him an object of importance, by making him an object of implacable reſentment.

One attack however he cannot help mentioning in this place, though it leads to a repetition of the Guildford Trial, becauſe it came from a quarter wholly unexpected; and from a quarter alſo too reſpectable to be overlooked, from the reverend Mr. Horne, at the meeting of the Middleſex freeholders at Mile-End, on Friday the 30th of April. At this meeting Mr. Horne, in ſumming up the various grievances under which he ſuppoſed the nation groaning from the tyranny of adminiſtration, took occaſion to deſcant on the ſoldier's trial for the murder of the unfortunate Mr. Allen, and expreſſed himſelf thus —— "It is neceſſary to give you an account of "Maclean's trial, becauſe the judge forbad it's being taken "down by any one, *except it was government*. — It has never "been publiſhed — A very falſe account of this trial has indeed "been publiſhed by Mr. KELLY, who was paid and brought "to Guildford for that purpoſe, and who had lodgings taken "for him there, and who was familiarly converſant with a gen-"tleman, whoſe name I ſhall not mention now, leſt it ſhould

ſeem

" ſeem to proceed from reſentment in me, for an account I " have to ſettle with him next week; however one circumſtance " I ought to tell you; this gentleman was foreman of the " grand jury. ——

Without dwelling on Mr. Horne's extraordinary tenderneſs to the gentleman whoſe name he will not mention, while he points him clearly out to every apprehenſion, Mr. Kelly will ſuppoſe that what was aſſerted with regard to him, Mr. Horne himſelf believed to be indiſputably true — Nay, Mr. Kelly is ſeriouſly of this opinion, becauſe many gentlemen of unqueſtionable veracity have aſſured him, that, abſtracted from the intemperance of party, Mr. Horne is in his underſtanding enlarged, and in his diſpoſition liberal. On theſe accounts however, Mr. Kelly differed from the politician, he always reſpected Mr Horne's private character, and did juſtice to what he conſidered the well meaning, though miſtaken zeal of the ſpirited freeholder, in the moment of his deepeſt concern at hearing a miniſter of peace, preaching diſcord through his country, and expreſſing an impatience of dying the veſtments of his ſacred function, in the blood of his fellow ſubjects.

But though Mr. Kelly readily makes this conceſſion in favour of Mr. Horne's private character, he muſt obſerve, that the conſtitution of this country, for the purity of which Mr. Horne is ſo ſtrenuous an advocate, does not allow the mere *belief* of any man to be *poſitive* evidence, nor compliment his ſimple *conjecture* with the force of a *fact*. — For this reaſon, Mr. Horne ſhould be extremely cautious how he aſſerts any thing to the prejudice of another's reputation; *hearſay* authority is not enough for this purpoſe; he ſhould know of his own *knowledge* what he aſſerts upon his own *word*; and be *certain* in his *proof*, where he is *peremptory* in his *accuſation*. —— If a circumſpection of this nature is neceſſary in every man of honour, it muſt give Mr. Horne much mortification to hear, after he has repreſented Hugh Kelly, to the freeholders of Middleſex, as a venal ſcribler, a ſhameleſs inſtrument of power, an atrocious defender of murder, that the whole charge ſhould be utterly groundleſs—That Kelly's account of Maclean's trial, ſhould be true in every circumſtance, that Kelly never expected or received a ſhilling for writing it, and that in the courſe of his days he has not once changed a ſyllable with Mr Onſlow, notwithſtanding the *converſant familiarity* at Guildford.

Strange however as all theſe things muſt appear, after Mr. Horne's poſitive affirmation to the contrary, all theſe things are moſt religiouſly veritable; and Mr. Horne is in this public manner called upon to prove an iota of his charge; it is his buſineſs to ſupport his own allegations, not Mr. Kelley's, to

endeavour

endeavour at eſtabliſhing negatives. — Let him therefore ſpiritedly proceed to his proofs. —— He has pronounced Mr. Kelly guilty, let him now ſhew in what his guilt conſiſts. — The moſt tyrannical miniſter can do no more than convict without evidence—in him however deſpotiſm is to be expected. But ſurely the rigid advocate for juſtice will not follow ſo dangerous an example; he will act reaſonably while he contends for reaſon, and conduct himſelf upon principles of legality, while he is generouſly ſtruggling for the preſervation of the laws.

In reality, if there is no more foundation in Mr. Horne's celebrated ſpeech, for the charges brought againſt government, than for the charges urged againſt Mr. Kelly, the catalogue of public grievances is rather ludicrous than melancholy. But without troubling Mr. Horne to ſupport his aſſertions, Mr. Kelly will ſhew theſe very aſſertions ſelf-refuted; he will prove them as inconſiſtent, as they are poſitive, and reſt his defence entirely on the nature of Mr. Horne's accuſation.

Mr. Horne ſets out with ſaying that the judge would not ſuffer the trial to be taken down by any body, except it was for government — Several nevertheleſs took it down, and among the reſt Mr. Chinnery and Mr. Gurney the profeſſed ſhort hand writers—Numbers beſides committed the moſt material paſſages to paper, and ſome to Mr. Kelly's knowledge *not* for Government; but, Mr. Kelly will ſay, that had he been hired by *adminiſtration* for the infamous purpoſe Mr. Horne mentions, it is not likely that the uſe of a pen would have been at all permitted in the court; it is not likely, that the judge would allow a *real* account of a trial to be taken, where a proſtitute writer was particularly employed to *miſrepreſent* it, nor is it likely that the miniſtry, while wiſhing to ſtand well with the world, would furniſh ſuch palpable evidence of it's own diſhonour—If there was any thing illegal in the proceeding of the court —— If an unwarrantable ſtretch of power reſcued the priſoner from juſtice, why has not the tranſaction been held up to univerſal indignation? — Why is it not recorded in the liſt of grievances preſented to the throne?—To make a ſolemn court of judicature the pandar of deſpotic authority would have been a crime of the firſt magnitude; it would have ſhaken the conſtitution to it's centre, and overwhelmed the miniſter with inevitable deſtruction. — But, wicked as ſome gentlemen in oppoſition might ſuppoſe the Government, they could not ſuppoſe it weak enough to overturn the laws thus deſperately at once, for the mere end of ſaving a private foot ſoldier from puniſhment; a pardon was an eaſy expedient, and mercy was not then conſidered criminal—Beſides, were the oſtenſible men in power as truthleſs as they have been painted, they would have

have given the priſoner up at once, they would have been regardleſs of his fate, nor would they have attempted to ſave him from the gibbet, by methods that muſt have unavoidably hurried themſelves to the block. The queſtion is not whether the unhappy Mr. Allen loſt a ſon, but whether that ſon fell by the hands of Maclean? — Humanity is melted when it thinks of a ſlaughtered child, and a weeping father — But humanity muſt ſtill be juſt — it muſt not wiſh for victims without guilt, nor dry up the tears of ſorrowing relations with a ſacrifice of unoffending blood.

The laſt part of Mr. Horne's aſſertion is to the full as extraordinary as the firſt. Mr. Kelly is made culpable for being *familiarly converſant* with the foreman of the grand jury at *Guildford*; though certainly, if there was a neceſſity for any mention of the grand juryman he ought to be mentioned with reſpect; becauſe the grand jury *found* the bill *againſt* Maclean, and conſequently, in that circumſtance, advanced the very wiſhes of popularity — Inſtead therefore of condemning Mr. Kelly for his intimacy with Mr. Onſlow in the preſent caſe, that intimacy ought to be an argument in Mr. Kelly's favour — But the truth is, Mr. Kelly in the whole courſe of his exiſtence, never once ſpoke to Mr. Onſlow, the grand juryman alluded to, knowing who he was, nor he believes at any rate, becauſe he knows Mr. Onſlow's perſon, and is flattered with the poſſeſſion of a tollerable memory——however, if Mr. Horne has evidence to the contrary—let him produce it — if not, let him for the future be more certain of his facts, or leſs peremptory in his aſſertions.

But poſſibly, though Mr. Horne is a ſtrong enemy to examination by interrogatory, he may nevertheleſs chooſe to aſk Mr. Kelly what buſineſs carried him to Guildford, if he did not go as a literary proſtitute in favour of government? To this Mr. Kelly will reply with another queſtion, What buſineſs had Mr. Horne there? Mr. Kelly ſurely has as much right to indulge his curioſity, and to ſupport what he conceives a juſt cauſe, as that gentleman — Mr. Horne cannot be a warmer well wiſher to true freedom, and to national happineſs than Mr. Kelly, though he purſues a very different plan of promoting them — Mr. Kelly's political opinions may be erroneous — but his intention is right — Had he been the venal thing he is repreſented, he might have carried his venality to a certain market — Popular applauſe is always fortune to a public writer of prudence, and the part Mr. Kelly has taken may be an impeachment of his judgment, but argues no depravity of his heart.

Upon the whole, with regard to Mr. Horne, if Mr. Kelly's account of the Guildford trial is falſe, let Mr. Horne point

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the fallacy out; if Mr. Kelly has been hired to write it, let Mr. Horne mention by whom --- and if it is criminal to be *familiarly converſant* with Mr. Onſlow, let Mr. Horne ſupport a ſingle inſtance of Mr. Kelly's familiarity with that gentleman. —— Mr. Horne ſoon after Mr. Kelly's account of the Guildford trial appeared, promiſed the world *a true ſtate* of that remarkable affair, and if Mr. Kelly ſhamefully miſrepreſented facts, the appearance of Mr. Horne's pamphlet was doubly neceſſary — That pamphlet has never yet appeared; and it cannot be ſuppoſed that a temper ſo ready to fire at light occaſions as Mr. Horne's, would ſuppreſs it, had there been any material cauſe of complaint to lay before the people.

Mr. Kelly has taken up a great deal of room with his trifling concerns, for which he ought to apologize. but as the publication of his play by ſubſcription, proceeded entirely from the generous partiality of his friends, he thought it his duty to let them at leaſt ſee, that though they might be ſupporting a dull writer, they were encouraging an honeſt man—The piece, with all it's imperfections on it's head, is now before the world; and the author hopes, if it ſhould even ſet the reader faſt aſleep, that nothing it contains will rouze his indignation: the moſt careful father he thinks may put it into the hands of his daughter, without any fear of wounding her delicacy, or unhinging her principles—This is it's chief, perhaps it's only merit, and perhaps, had it been heard on the ſtage with patience, it might have been condemned with juſtice —— Mr. Kelly will therefore conſole himſelf with his optimiſt Willoughby, by thinking every thing happens for the beſt, and look upon that very prejudice which has ſuppreſſed his poor performance as ultimately fortunate, ſince it may have been the means of preſerving his little ſhare of reputation.

He cannot however conclude this addreſs without an obſervation or two upon the melancholy ſituation of dramatic writers --- and as it is poſſible that he himſelf may never more venture a production on the ſtage, he hopes what he has further to advance, will merit an additional conſideration from his readers.

The great decline of dramatic genius in this country, has been for many years an object of general concern with the public, and the lovers of the theatre have ardently wiſhed, that ſome happy ſtimulus might be diſcovered to encreaſe the number of writers for the ſtage; yet, though this wiſh has prevailed univerſally, and though the credit, as well as the emolument ariſing from a ſucceſsful play is not a little tempting, ſtill the danger attending the repreſentation of the beſt pieces, is ſo conſiderable, that the few writers bleſſed with eaſy fortunes do not chooſe to run the hazard, and moſt

moſt of thoſe who live by the ſale of their productions, are content to follow ſtudies leſs profitable, for a more certain reward of their labours.

Beſides this, the difficulty, the toil, the downright drudgery of writing a good play is inconceivable; it is a work which requires long time and a cloſe application; it is a work in which neither the moſt extenſive erudition, nor the moſt accurate underſtanding can enſure an author ſucceſs——In every other ſpecies of compoſition, judgment, genius, and education are almoſt certain of a triumph—but here knowledge of the world is indiſpenſibly requiſite—An acquaintance with the manners, and with the paſſions is requiſite.—Nor are theſe ſufficient without an invention to ſtrike out variety; and a ſkill to produce effects, by a forcible diſplay of ſituation—It is not the good ſenſe only of an audience which is addreſſed—but their feelings; they muſt be agreeably ſurprized while they are publicly inſtructed, and the Muſe, like other beauties, muſt be raviſhing to the general eye, before ſhe can be dear to the general heart.

When therefore the difficulty attending a dramatic work is ſo conſiderable; when perhaps there is another conſiderable difficulty to get a play received by the ſtage, and another ſtill to find a capital company of performers to repreſent it, inſtead of wondering that the number of writers is ſo ſmall, we ſhould in reality wonder how it is ſo reſpectable.—But if we look ſtill farther, we ſhall be ſurprized that *any* author riſks his bark upon the dangerous ocean of the theatre.—It is a melancholy truth, that the people who write moſt for the ſtage, are rather remarkable for their ingenuity than their opulence.—On this account a diſappointment to them is an eſſential misfortune. Yet a few private enemies can at all times fruſtrate their expectations. In vain an unfortunate man of letters may labour for many months with a laudable view of entertaining the town, and improving his own circumſtances;—and in vain he may exert his utmoſt efforts to merit the protection of an audience, if he has unhappily given one individual an offence. The moment his piece is talked of, a party is poſſibly formed to damn it; and many who would not join this party from malevolence, give it countenance, for the pleaſure, as it is called, *of kicking up a riot in the playhouſe.*—Thus the littleneſs of perſonal pique, and the levity of inconſiderate laughter, have the poet totally at their mercy.—The curtain riſes, and the ſtorm begins; nor can the generous interpoſition of nine tenths among the auditors preſerve the play from deſtruction. There is as much confuſion created by the deſire of "*go on, go on,*" as by the cry, "*go off, go off.*" Whatever diſturbs the repreſentation has a tendency to injure it;

ſo that a performance exhibited during a ſtate of contention muſt deſpair of ſucceſs;—the ſupporters conſtantly interrupted have no opportunity of being entertained, and naturally enough, perhaps attribute the fault to the author; while the oppoſition deciſively pronouncing upon what is predetermined not to hear, kindly brands him with the epithet of an incorrigible, dunce, and, not content with the injury done to his fortune, makes an equal attack upon his literary character.

Such being the ſituation of dramatic genius in this country, let the public themſelves judge, whether an author has any mighty encouragement to write for the ſtage.—Perhaps the poet, treated in the manner now deſcribed, has no dependence but his talents; perhaps upon the ſucceſs of the very piece thus ſuppreſſed he built his chief eſtabliſhment in life, and founded every future proſpect of bringing up a growing family with reputation.—What muſt his feelings then be, to find his hopes all blaſted in a ſingle hour—to find the very labour, poſſibly of years, deſtroyed in an inſtant, by the people for whoſe entertainment he laboured; and to ſee the bread not only wreſted from the hands of his unoffending little ones, but to ſee them even expoſed to the ſtill perſecuting reſentment of prejudice, for the imaginary offences of their father.—What muſt be his feelings—Yet forbear humanity to inquire—the anſwer will harrow up your boſom—Generoſity, turn away from the picture, it muſt deluge you with tears.---The ſcene of poetical diſtreſs however ſketched to the reader's imagination, thanks to the goodneſs of Providence, is far from being Mr. Kelly's ſituation; but it often has been, and often may be, the ſituation of a much worthier man.---Mr. Kelly is affluent beyond his merits---nay, beyond his utmoſt hopes, he poſſeſſes the riches of content in a very extenſive manner, and can ſit down to his humble repaſt with pleaſure, in the honeſt recollection that it is punctually paid for.

The difficulties here pointed out, for dramatic genius to encounter, are difficulties to which every writer for the ſtage is conſtantly expoſed; but the danger becomes infinitely more formidable, if, in times of party feud, he renders himſelf in the leaſt diſagreeable to the popular ſide of the queſtion; the unreflecting virtue of numbers then, as in Mr. Kelly's caſe, will arm againſt him, and think it meritorious to condemn the production, that puniſhment may be inflicted upon the imputed delinquency of the man.—In times like the preſent therefore, what is a dramatic writer to do?—To hold his tongue, replies cold blooded prudence.—And what has the unfortunate man of letters committed, that he alone of all the community is to be denied the privilege of ſpeaking his ſentiments? Say, ye various ſons of ſcience, will you ſubmit

mit to this despicable slavery of the mind? Are you, above the generality of mankind, distinguished for your education and your understanding, to be refused an opinion, where an opinion is deemed the birth-right of your meanest fellow-subject? Shall it be your glory to inculcate lessons of generosity and independence, and yet be your crime to practise these lessons themselves? — Shall your writings breathe the noblest spirit of candour, and your lives be a round of the poorest dissimulation? —— Shall you think your country in danger, and yet be afraid to speak a syllable for it's preservation? — No, you will not tear the finer principles from your breasts; you will not set an example of so abject a disingenuity. — Whatever meets the approbation of your judgment, will be supported by the sanction of your voice, and however you may meet with reproach, you will at least be careful not to deserve it. — When administration is indefensible, you will be too honest to combat in it's cause; but, at the same time you will not hesitate to condemn the errors of popularity. — You will be always animated by a real solicitude for the public, and be as careful to guard against the extravagance of it's over-zealous friends, as to provide against the machinations of it's most politic enemies. — Acting thus you may be poor, but you will ever be respectable. — Posterity will do you justice, if you are even oppressed by your cotemporaries, and you will find ample resources in the consciousness of your integrity, to compensate for the severest disappointments in your fortune.

To conclude — If men of talents have an equal right of thinking with the rest of their fellow-subjects, and if they are not precluded by the generally acknowledged superiority of their understandings, from declaring their sentiments upon subjects of national importance, the lovers of the drama must see that nothing can be so dangerous to the existence of genius, as the introduction of political disputes into the theatre. The party which condemns a writer of different principles on one day, may see a favourite author, sacrificed the very next by their enemies in politics; and the violence may continue till there is scarcely an individual hardy enough to furnish our managers with a piece. The state of the stage is at present sufficiently deplorable; and it's literature, instead of wanton opposition, calls loudly for the generous hand of public encouragement. — Give it this encouragement therefore, ye wise, and ye worthy — rescue your writers from the worst of all tyrannies, and no longer form your minds by the sentiments of those, who are not allowed to possess any minds of their own.

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OF THE

VERY JUST RESPECT HE ENTERTAINS

FOR

HIS PRIVATE CHARACTER.

# PROLOGUE.

## WRITTEN BY MR. KELLY.

## SPOKEN BY MR. KING.

WELL, here you are, and comfortably ſqueez'd ——
But do you come *quite* willing to be pleas'd?—
Say, do you wiſh for bravo — fine — encore ——
Or — hiſs — off, off, — no more — no more — no more ——
Tho' for true taſte I know the warmth you feel,
A roaſted poet is a glorious meal ——
And oft I've known a miſerable wit,
Thro' downright laughter faſtn'd on the ſpit,
Baſted, with cat-call ſauce, for very fun,
Not till quite ready —— but till quite undone ——
And yet you ſerv'd the puppy as you ought ——
How dare he think to tell you of a fault ——
What fair one here from prudence *ever* ſtrays,
What lover here *e'er* flatters or betrays?
What huſband here is *ever* found to roam,
What wife is here that does not *doat* on home?
In yon gay circle, not a blooming face
From Club's rude king cou'd point you out the face;
No ſober trader, in that crowed pit,
'Till clear, broad day will o'er his bottle ſit;
Nor while our commerce *fatally* decays,
Erect his villa, or ſet up his chaiſe ——
Nay, you above, in cake-conſuming bow'rs,
Who thro' whole Sundays munge away your hours;

# PROLOGUE.

You are ſo mild, ſo gentle, that ev'n here,
Your ſweet ton'd voices never wound the ear;
*Ne'er* make the houſe for tune or prologue ring,
Roaſt-beef — roaſt-beef — the prologue, prologue — King —
Why then, thus weigh'd in truth's ſevereſt ſcale,
Shall each pert ſcribbler impudently rail,
With dull morality diſgrace the ſtage,
And talk of vices in ſo *pure* an age;
Your wiſe forefathers, in politer days,
Had ev'n their faults commended in their plays,
To cheat a friend, or violate a wife,
Was then true humour, comedy, and life——
But now the bard becomes your higheſt boaſt,
Whoſe ill-bred pen traduces you the moſt;
Whoſe ſaucy muſe can hardily aver
That ſtill a *lady* poſſibly can err;
That ſtill a *lord* can trick you at a bet,
And fools and madmen are exiſting yet——
Be rous'd at laſt — nor, in an age ſo nice,
Let theſe grave dunces teize you with advice——
What, tho' ſome taylor's oft protracted bill
May hang all trembling on the author's quill,
Regard it not, remove the growing evil —
A well dreſt poet is the very devil——
Do taverns dun him — What, can ſcribblers treat?
Fine times, indeed, when ſcribblers think to eat——
Do juſtice then — to-night, ten minutes here
May blaſt the bard's whole labour of a year——
What do I ſee! — reſentment in your eyes?
'Tis true, the fellow at your mercy lies;
And of all wreaths, the Briton's nobleſt crown,
Is ne'er to ſtrike an enemy when down——

*

# Dramatis Perſonæ.

## MEN.

| | |
|---|---|
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| Sir John Dormer, | Mr. Reddiſh. |
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| Lucy, | Miſs Platt. |

A

# WORD to the WISE.

## ACT I.

SCENE, *an Apartment in* Sir JOHN DORMER'S *Houſe.*

*Enter* Sir JOHN DORMER, Miſs DORMER, and Miſs MONTAGU.

Sir JOHN.

WELL but, my dear Caroline, tho' I grant you that Sir George Haſtings has his peculiarities, ſtill you muſt grant me that he has many very amiable qualities.

Miſs DORMER.

I never denied Sir George's merit, Sir, but all his good qualities cannot conceal his unaccountable coxcombry; his attention is conſtantly centered in himſelf, and there is no enduring a man who fancies that every woman muſt at firſt ſight fall violently in love with him.

Sir JOHN.

Do you hear her, Miſs Montagu?

Miſs MONTAGU.

Why, Sir John, there is no accounting for inclination, you know; — however, I cannot look upon Sir George in the very ridiculous light he appears to Miſs Dormer.

Miſs DORMER.

No — why he is a narciſſus that continually makes love to his own ſhadow, and I can't bear the idea of a huſband, in whoſe affection I am likely to be every moment rival'd by the looking-glaſs.

Miſs MONTAGU.

Nay now, my dear, you are rather hard upon him.—Sir George may poſſibly be a little too fond of himſelf ——

Sir JOHN.

But that does'nt prevent him from entertaining very tender ſentiments for Caroline Dormer.

Miſs MONTAGU.

He may be unneceſſarily attentive to the niceties of dreſs ——

Sir JOHN.

But then he is attentive to every law of juſtice and generoſity.

Miſs MONTAGU.

And if his foibles provoke us to an occaſional ſmile, his worth muſt always excite our warmeſt admiration.

Miſs DORMER.

Upon my word, Harriot, a very florid winding up of a period, and very proper for an elevated thought in a ſentimental Comedy;—but I tell you, I ſhould reliſh theſe encomiums on Sir George well enough, if he was not ſo particularly recommended

mended to my attention. — I really can't ſupport the imagination of vowing honour and obedience to the object of my own ridicule, and it wou'd mortify my pride beyond conception, to ſee my huſband the conſtant jeſt of his acquaintance.

Sir JOHN.

My dear Caroline, don't be too difficult in your choice, nor entertain any romantic idea of finding a huſband, all perfection.—The expectation of too much before marriage, frequently imbitters the union after;—and as the beſt men will have their little blemiſhes, we may ſurely number thoſe among the beſt, in whoſe characters we can diſcover nothing more than a few trifling peculiarities.

Miſs DORMER.

I ſee, Sir, you make a point of this affair.

Sir JOHN.

I wou'd not make a point of any thing, my dear, which I thought wou'd be in the leaſt repugnant to your happineſs:—but, really, when I conſider this propoſal in every reſpect, when I conſider the rank, the fortune, and what is above all, the merit of the man, I cannot but wiſh that you wou'd give him a favourable reception; and this the more eſpecially, as I am convinced, if the match ſhould take place, that your fine ſenſe and ſweetneſs of temper, will eaſily mould your huſband to your wiſh, and quickly remove every trace of thoſe foibles, which are at preſent the only reaſon of your objection.

Miſs DORMER.

You are very good, Sir.

Sir JOHN.

This morning, my dear, Sir George purpoſes to declare himſelf in form.—If you can receive his addreſſes, you will make him happy, and oblige me exceedingly; — but if you cannot, deal ingenuouſly, and reject him; the juſtice which I owe to him, as well as the tenderneſs which I have for you, makes this advice doubly requiſite.

*Enter a* SERVANT.

SERVANT.

Mr. Willoughby, Sir.

Sir JOHN.

I'll wait upon him inſtantly. [*Exit Serv.*] Think therefore ſeriouſly, Caroline, before you determine, for I neither wiſh to cheat my friend into the poſſeſſion of a reluctant heart, nor to ſacrifice my daughter to the object of her averſion. [*Exit.*]

Miſs DORMER.

Well, Harriot, what ſhall I do?—You hear he has actually mention'd him to me in the moſt ſerious terms, and that this very morning he is to make a formal declaration.

Miſs MONTAGU.

And what then, does'nt Sir John deſire you to reject him, if he is really diſagreeable?—Can you poſſibly wiſh for a greater degree of indulgence?

Miſs DORMER.

And yet that very indulgence, my dear Miſs Montagu, is likely to render me extremely miſerable.

Miſs MONTAGU.

Why indeed, *Miſs* Dormer—remember, child, you complimented me firſt with the cold reſpectful

ful epithet of Miſs—the men in general ſay that the ſureſt way of making a woman wretched is to indulge her inclinations—But pray, my dear, why is this liberty which Sir John allows you, of promoting your own happineſs, ſo very likely to make you miſerable.

Miſs DORMER.

Ah, Harriot! don't you ſee that while he is ſo generouſly anxious to conſult my wiſhes, I am bound by gratitude, as well as juſtice, to pay the greateſt regard to his expectations.

Miſs MONTAGU.

You are really an excellent girl, my dear. But pray anſwer me one queſtion ſeriouſly.

Miſs DORMER.

What is it?

Miſs MONTAGUE.

Is this diſlike, which you entertain to your father's choice, entirely the reſult of your averſion to Sir George? or is it, be honeſt now, the conſequence of a ſecret partiality for ſomebody elſe?

Miſs DORMER.

A ſecret partiality for ſomebody elſe? Pray, my dear, for whom is it likely I ſhould entertain a partiality?

Miſs MONTAGU.

Caroline, Caroline, this reſerve is ill ſuited both to the nature of our friendſhip and the cuſtomary frankneſs of your temper—yet notwithſtanding the ſecreſy you have hitherto ſo unkindly obſerv'd, I can eaſily ſee that Mr. Villars—What, conſcious, Caroline?

Miſs

Miſs DORMER.

O Harriot, ſpare me—nor be offended that I have endeavour'd to keep a ſecret from you, which I abſolutely ſhudder to whiſper to myſelf—to deal candidly, my dear, I muſt acknowledge that your charge is but too juſt—and notwithſtanding every effort of my pride, and every argument of my prudence, I find this humble yet deſerving Villars poſſeſſes a much higher place in my eſteem than can be conſiſtent with my happineſs.

Miſs MONTAGU.

Why, to do the young fellow juſtice, he is really very agreeable, and has ſomething in his manner that would do credit to a more eligible ſituation—but—

Miſs DORMER.

Ay, Harriot, there's the misfortune—agreeable as he is in every reſpect, he is ſtill a total dependent on my father, and thinks himſelf extremely happy that his talents have obtain'd him even a temporary eſtabliſhment in an opulent family.

Miſs MONTAGU.

Well, my dear, Sir John is generous, and Mr. Villars is very uſeful to him in his literary reſearches; beſides, I am not a little pleas'd at the diſtinction with which he, as well as the Captain, conſtantly treats Mr. Villars.

Miſs DORMER.

I don't know how it is—Mr. Villars has a manner of commanding reſpect from every body; he is humble without ſervility, and ſpirited——

Miſs MONTAGU.

Oh! he is every thing that's amiable, no doubt —and the ſtars have been exceedingly relentleſs

in

in not giving him a large fortune—however, if I have any ſkill in the buſineſs of the heart, Villars is to the full as uneaſy upon your account as you can poſſibly be on his—he is always contriving excuſes for converſing with you, yet when he does, he is in viſible confuſion; and it was only yeſterday evening, when I beg'd he wou'd put a letter for me into the poſt-office, that he ſtammer'd out, in the utmoſt perplexity, "I ſhall "take particular care, Madam, to deliver it to "Miſs Dormer."

Miſs DORMER.

If this be the caſe, Harriot, I muſt indeed behave with particular circumſpection to him; and yet, tho' I ſee the impoſſibility of ever being his, he has given me an inſuperable averſion to the reſt of his ſex.

Miſs MONTAGU.

What then do you intend to do with Sir George?

Miſs DORMER.

To reject him; but ſtill to do it without giving any offence to my father.

Miſs MONTAGU.

And how do you propoſe to manage it?

Miſs DORMER.

By throwing myſelf honeſtly upon Sir George's humanity, by telling him my affection is engaged, and by begging of him to withdraw his addreſſes in ſuch a manner as ſhall appear to be the reſult of his own choice, and not the conſequence of my diſinclination — Sir George, notwithſtanding his egregious vanity is uncommonly good-natur'd —but let us retire to my room, my dear, I am

unfit

unfit for company at preſent, and here we are likely to be broken in upon.—O Harriot.

Miſs MONTAGU.

And O, Caroline, what a very fooliſh figure does a woman make, when ſhe is lamentably in love. [*Exeunt.*]

*Enter* Sir GEORGE HASTINGS *and* Captain DORMER.

DORMER.

Well, my brother-in-law elect, —you are very ſplendidly dreſs'd this morning.

Sir GEORGE.

Why, Jack, I think, I do make a pretty tolerable appearance.

DORMER.

And do you think this appearance calculated to make an impreſſion upon a woman of ſpirit.—Zounds, man, give up your pretenſions, for nothing but a fellow of life is likely to ſucceed with my ſiſter I can promiſe you.

Sir GEORGE.

A fellow of life, Jack;—that is, I ſuppoſe, a fellow of profligacy:—truly you pay your ſiſter a very pretty compliment.

DORMER.

And why pray do you neceſſarily connect the idea of life with the idea of profligacy?

Sir GEORGE.

Becauſe, in the vocabulary of libertines, like you, Jack, the word life always means a round of every thing that is fooliſh or unwarrantable.

DORMER.

DORMER.

Why, what the devil are you turn'd fanatic, George, that you begin to deal ſo much in ſecond-hand morality?

Sir GEORGE.

In ſhort, your fellows of ſpirit never allow a man a ſcruple of common-ſenſe, till he has entirely proſtituted his underſtanding; nor ſuppoſe him to be fit for a commerce with the world, till he abſolutely merits to be hunted out of ſociety.

DORMER.

Well but, George, there is one exceſs of which you yourſelf have been guilty; and I have known the time, when you took a bottle ſo freely, that you were generally made toaſt-maſter of the company.

Sir GEORGE.

Yes, but I ſoon found out that drinking was deteſtable, and toaſting the greateſt of all abſurdities.

DORMER.

Why how wou'd you wiſh to paſs an evening? — Can any thing exceed the pleaſure of ſociety, with a few ſelect friends of good-nature and vivacity?

Sir GEORGE.

O nothing to be ſure is ſo delightful as guzzling down half a dozen bottles, and enjoying the rational diſcourſe—of where does the toaſt ſtand—with you, Sir William—no, with you, Sir George—fill him a bumper, Captain Dormer—fill him to the top.——O, an evening ſpent in this manner muſt be delectable, eſpecially if a couple of fools ſhould happily quarrel in their cups, and cut one another's throat to prove the ſuperiority of their underſtanding.

DORMER.

Ha! ha! ha!—But was this all your objection to the bottle?

Sir GEORGE.

No, for it made my heach ach, and diſorder'd my dreſs beyond bearing.

DORMER.

Diſorder'd your dreſs, ha! ha! ha! what unaccountable coxcombry.

Sir GEORGE.

Why to be ſure it's a very ridiculous thing for a man to ſhew a little regard for decency.

DORMER.

Well, notwithſtanding you are a coxcomb ſyſtematically, I am ſure the character will not be a ſtrong recommendation to my ſiſter.

Sir GEORGE.

Your ſiſter, Jack, is a woman of ſenſe, and muſt ſee that ſhe has a much ſtronger chance of being happy with me, than poor Miſs Montagu has of being happy with her brother.—My heart is unadulterated, and is therefore worth any woman's acceptance.

DORMER.

O no doubt it is a very valuable acquiſition.

Sir GEORGE.

Whereas, you fellows of life, hawk about your hearts from commoner to commoner, till they become quite contemptible; and then with the additional merit of broken conſtitutions,—tottering limbs,—pale cheeks, and hollow eyes, you politely offer the refuſe of the ſtews to ladies of fortune, family, and character.

DORMER.

And ſo your affection is unadulterated;—ha! ha! ha!

Sir

Sir GEORGE.

Ay, laugh on and welcome; — but who have we here?

DORMER.

Mr. Willoughby, who will keep you in countenance with maxims of muſty morality.

Sir GEORGE.

What, my good-natur'd optimiſt, who thinks every thing happens for the beſt?

DORMER.

Ay, Candide to perfection, who is continually bleſſing his ſtars the more they load him with misfortunes;—and pray heaven his buſineſs here this morning has not been to talk with Sir John about my intimacy in his family. [*aſide.*]

*Enter* WILLOUGHBY.

WILLOUGHBY.

Sir George, your moſt obedient.—Captain, I am your humble ſervant.

Sir GEORGE.

Mr. Willoughby, yours.—How do the ladies, Sir?—the good Mrs. Willoughby, and your amiable daughter.

WILLOUGHBY.

Why my daughter, Sir George, is very well;—and my wife is as uſual, continually embittering every comfort of life, and lamenting the miſeries attendant on mortality.

Sir GEORGE.

I wonder ſhe does not chuſe to follow the ſenſible example you ſet her, and endeavour rather to leſſen, than to aggravate the meaſure of unavoidable misfortunes.—She's a young woman, and miſanthropy at her age is rather out of character.

WILLOUGHBY.

Why yes, Sir George, she's twenty good years younger than I am, and yet she is twenty times more impatient under the smallest disappointment.

Sir GEORGE.

But, my good friend, you don't think her youth a very unfortunate circumstance?

WILLOUGHBY.

O, Sir George, my principle is to think every thing for the best.

DORMER.

Well said, Mr. Willoughby.

WILLOUGHBY.

It was'nt her youth, however, that struck me, but the sobriety of her conduct, and her affection for my daughter;—she was besides a distant relation of my first wife's—liv'd with us in the same house; and some how I lik'd her, because having no fortune, it gave her but little expectation of a better husband.

Sir GEORGE.

But why don't you teach her to adopt some part of your own fortitude under disappointment?

DORMER.

Perhaps it is not in her power to exercise so desirable a philosophy.

WILLOUGHBY.

My dear Captain, life has misfortunes enough without our being industrious to encrease the number of them—when an accident therefore happens, we shou'd consider that, bad as it may be, it might have been still worse; and instead of arrogantly murmuring at the dispensations of providence, we shou'd thankfully acknowledge the goodness that did not plunge us into a deeper degree of affliction.

Sir

Sir GEORGE.

Upon my word I think there is much reaſon in this argument.

WILLOUGHBY.

Ay, and much policy too, Sir George — we ſhou'd always imagine that every thing happens for the beſt—about ten years ago I broke my leg by a fall from a horſe——

DORMER.

And pray did this prove a fortunate accident?

WILLOUGHBY.

Yes; for your father, who generouſly pitied my ſituation, got my place continued to my family; ſo that, if I drop off to-morrow, there's a comfortable proviſion for them—Indeed when the accident happened I cou'dn't foreſee this conſequence — however, I made the beſt of matters—was thankful that I hadn't broke both my legs, and drew a kind of negative good fortune from a ſtroke of real calamity.

Sir GEORGE.

Why what the devil is this fellow Dormer laughing at?

DORMER.

Why how the devil can I help laughing, when the very evils of life are made ſo many indirect inſtruments of happineſs.

WILLOUGHBY.

Oh! let him laugh, Sir George; he can by no means joke me out of my ſentiments—why when my ſon was ſtolen from me in his infancy—I found a conſolation in reflecting that I had not loſt my daughter too;—and tho' I have never ſince been able to hear any account of my poor boy, I am ſatisfied he was taken from me for the beſt, and I bear my lot with reſignation.

DORMER.

DORMER.

How! do you ſet down the loſs of your ſon in the chapter of fortunate accidents?

Sir GEORGE.

Negatively he may, Dormer; for he might have turned out a libertine like yourſelf, and in that caſe his being loſt is indeed a very fortunate circumſtance.

DORMER.

Very ſmart truly—but I ſuppoſe you bear your lot with reſignation too, Sir George,—for you have lately got a good two thouſand a year by the death of this young fellow's godfather, old Webly the humoriſt; and it is your intereſt to pray that he never may be found, as there is a certain clauſe in the will you know, which —

Sir GEORGE.

Which obliges me to inveſt him with this eſtate if ever he is diſcovered—a mighty hardſhip really; and you muſt be a very pretty fellow to ſuppoſe it any way difficult for an honeſt man, to do a common act of juſtice.

WILLOUGHBY.

All for the beſt ſtill, Captain.—Sir George we are certain will do good with his fortune,—whereas had it been poſſeſſed by my boy,—how am I ſure that it wou'd not be applied to very different purpoſes: —yet who knows that it might either; —who knows but—however [*ſtifling his emotion*] I am poſitive every thing happened for the beſt, —and ſo—and ſo a good morning to you. [*Exit.*]

Sir GEORGE.

Poor man, how ſenſibly he feels the loſs of his ſon, notwithſtanding his endeavours to be chearful.—But what am I throwing away my time upon you for, when I have buſineſs of ſo much impor-

tance with your ſiſter? Good bye, Jack, and now let us ſee if profligates only are to meet encouragement from the ladies. [*Exit.*]

DORMER.

Ha! ha! ha! was there ever ſuch a compound of ſentiment and vanity.—Caroline muſt keep the fellow in a glaſs caſe, or he'll kill himſelf before the honey-moon is over, with the fatigue of ſeeing company. [*Going.*]

*Enter* Sir JOHN.

Sir JOHN.

Jack, Jack, come back a little—I want a word or two with you.

DORMER.

I fear'd as much [*aſide.*] What are your commands, Sir?

Sir JOHN.

Why, Jack, I need not tell you how anxious I am to have you ſettled in the world, nor is it neceſſary for me to put you in mind of the engagement I enter'd into with my late worthy friend, Sir Ralph Montagu.

DORMER.

I know your obliging ſollicitude for me extremely well, Sir, and I feel it with the moſt grateful ſenſibility,—but ſure there is yet time enough before I undertake the important charge of a family.

Sir JOHN.

Come, come, you have ſeen enough of the world to become, if you pleaſe, a uſeful member of ſociety;—beſides, Miſs Montagu is now without a father, and ſhou'd be treated with an additional degree of attention.—Nothing therefore can be more improper than to keep a young lady of her merit

and

and fortune waiting for the result of your determination, when you ought to think it a very great honour that she can be prevail'd upon to receive you as a husband.

DORMER.

Miss Montagu, Sir, will, I dare say, be no way offended at the delay, if I can judge from the indifference with which she constantly behaves to me.

Sir JOHN.

And how can she behave otherwise, when you constantly treat her with indifference?——To be plain with you however, Jack, I fear you are too wild, too dissipated, to think seriously:—you moreover possess a spirit of gallantry, which gives me many an uneasy moment,—and I am not a little troubled at your continual visits to Mr. Willoughby's.

DORMER.

To Mr. Willoughby, Sir,—to your own particular friend!

Sir JOHN.

Yes, and the more I esteem him, the more uneasy I must naturally be at your visiting there so frequently.—Miss Willoughby has a fine person, and a feeling heart; she thinks, besides, I have obliged her father, and may in the fulness of her gratitude, imbibe sentiments for the son of his benefactor. — Take care, therefore, take care; gallantry, tho' a fashionable crime, is a very detestable one; and the wretch who pilfers from us in the hour of his necessity, is an innocent character, compared to the plunderer who wantonly robs us of happiness and reputation.

DORMER.

I hope, Sir, I shall never do any thing to bring a reflection upon the honour of my family.

Sir

Sir JOHN.

I hope not, Jack, and therefore I cou'd wiſh you were not a man of gallantry :—to engage the confidence of the innocent on purpoſe to betray it, is as mean as it is inhuman.

*Enter a* SERVANT.

SERVANT.

Every thing is ready in the library, Sir.

Sir JOHN.

Very well—[*Exit Serv.*] Come, Jack, think a little on what I have ſaid ;—in my ſon let me for once find a friend ; — the honour of my family is now materially truſted in your hands, and tho' my tenderneſs for you may feel at any proſtitution of that honour, be aſſur'd that my juſtice will never allow me to pardon it. [*Exit Sir John.*

*Enter* VILLARS.

DORMER.

Well, Villars, I fancy Willoughby has at laſt made a complaint to my father, for I am commanded, in the moſt poſitive terms to think of an immediate marriage with Miſs Montagu.

VILLARS.

And isn't it by much the moſt ſenſible courſe you can follow ? — Miſs Montagu is a very fine young lady.

DORMER.

True—but you have never ſeen Miſs Willoughby.

VILLARS.

Beſides the great fortune—

DORMER.

Miſs Willoughby.

VILLARS.

That courts your acceptance, if I may ſo expreſs myſelf—

DORMER.

Miſs Willoughby.

VILLARS.

Oh—I ſee how it is;—and are you then determin'd to marry Miſs Willoughby?

DORMER.

Not ſo faſt—not quite ſo faſt, my dear Villars, I beg of you:—Miſs Willoughby certainly poſſeſſes a greater ſhare of my affection than any other woman in the world; and I don't know, if my father could be brought to approve of ſuch a match, that I ſhould find the leaſt diſinclination to marry her: — but as matters ſtand at preſent there's no likelihood of ſuch a circumſtance, and therefore I wou'dn't chooſe to diſoblige Sir John in ſo material a point, eſpecially as my wiſhes with regard to Miſs Willoughby may poſſibly be indulg'd without ſo conſiderable a ſacrifice.

VILLARS.

I don't underſtand you.

DORMER.

Why Miſs Willoughby knew all along of my engagement with Miſs Montagu, and conſequently had no reaſon to ſuppoſe that my intentions cou'd be very matrimonial; beſides, ſhe let nobody into the ſecret of my addreſſes but her ridiculous ſtepmother, who is a miſerable compound of avarice and affectation—indeed, to do the young lady juſtice, it was a conſiderable time before ſhe wou'd hear a ſyllable of a tender nature from me, on account of my connection with Miſs Montagu.

VILLARS.

And how did you manage it at laſt?

DORMER.

Why in the cuſtomary manner: — I talk'd a damn'd deal of nonſenſe with a very tragical tone and a very melancholy countenance — exclaim'd againſt

againſt the tyranny of fathers who wanted to force the inclinations of their children from deſpicable motives of intereſt—and curs'd the poor ſtars for giving her ſo much beauty, and making me ſo ſenſible of it:—then preſſing her tenderly by the hand, I uſually ran out of the room, as if in violent emotion, affecting to gulp down a torrent of tears, and left her own pity to be my advocate the moment ſhe recovered the uſe of her recollection.

VILLARS.

What, and did this anſwer your purpoſe, Sir?

DORMER.

Oh, perfectly; the women are inconceivably fond of the pathetic, and liſten to you with rapture if you talk about death or diſtraction—ſtring but the mine of their pity, you ſoon blow their hearts into a flame — and reap more ſervice from an hour of compleat ſubſtantial miſery than from a whole year of the moſt paſſionate adoration.

VILLARS.

Well, Captain, and may I preſume to aſk what uſe you intend to make of Miſs Willoughby's partiality for you?

DORMER.

Why faith, Villars, that's a very puzzling queſtion upon the whole;—notwithſtanding all my levity, you know I have the deepeſt reverence for my father, and he muſt not be diſoblig'd upon any account,—tho' to deal honeſtly with you, I have no mighty inclination to Miſs Montagu.

VILLARS.

And what muſt become of poor Miſs Willoughby?

DORMER.

Why I ſhou'd'nt like to be a raſcal there neither,—yet what can one do;—where a woman's weak enough to encourage the addreſſes of a man whom ſhe knows to be pre-engaged, ſhe gives him a kind

of title to deceive her: — beſides, Villars, Miſs Willoughby has herſelf ſhewn a genius for duplicity in this affair which ſhou'd make a man of any ſenſe a little conſiderate.

VILLARS.

How ſo, pray?

DORMER.

Don't you recollect ſhe has deceiv'd her father thro' the whole tranſaction? and it is a maxim with me that the woman who can forget the ſentiments of nature, has half an inclination to forget the ſentiments of virtue.

VILLARS.

Poor Miſs Willoughby!

DORMER.

You are mightily concern'd for a woman you never ſaw in your life; however, be eaſy — I am as ſentimental for a libertine, you know, as any fellow in the kingdom, and it ſhall be Miſs Willoughby's own fault if matters are carried to extremities.—But, Villars, ſtep with me to my agent's, and we'll talk farther on this ſubject:—few people deſpiſe money more than myſelf, and yet there are few to whom a ſnug ſum would at this moment be more acceptable.

VILLARS.

You promiſe me then that in this affair of Miſs Willoughby's—

DORMER.

Zounds, Villars, I won't brag too much neither, —I am ſtill fleſh and blood, — and theſe make a very dangerous compoſition in the hour of love and opportunity.

VILLARS.

My dear Captain, this is no jeſting matter—the happineſs of a deſerving young lady is at ſtake, and a laugh will but poorly repay a violation of your honour, or a breach of your humanity. [*Exeunt.*]

END *of the* FIRST ACT.

# ACT II.

## SCENE, WILLOUGHBY'S *House.*

*Enter* Mr. *and* Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

AND ſo my prudent, ſage, conſiderate dear, you have actually adviſed Sir John Dormer to reſtrain his ſon's viſits to our houſe?

WILLOUGHBY.

Yes, that was my buſineſs at Sir John's this morning.

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

And you imagine this wiſe meaſure will turn out for the beſt I ſuppoſe?

WILLOUGHBY.

I do really ——

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

What? You think it for the beſt to let your poor family continue always in obſcurity;—and look upon it as a great unhappineſs, whenever they have the leaſt chance of riſing in the world?

WILLOUGHBY.

And you think I have done a mighty fooliſh thing in preſerving the peace as well as the honour of my poor family, from the greateſt of all misfortunes?

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

From the greateſt of all misfortunes! did any body ever hear the like?——Why I tell you Captain Dormer is in love, paſſionately in love with your daughter.

WIL-

WILLOUGHBY.

So much the worſe —

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

So much the worſe! this is the only thing in which you ever forgot your all for the beſt principle. — So much the worſe! ſo much the better I tell you ;—and in all likelihood he might have married her, if your ridiculous fear of being happy, had not put Sir John upon his guard, to prevent ſo deſirable a circumſtance.

WILLOUGHBY.

What, madam, wou'd you have me trepan the only ſon of my benefactor, into a marriage with my daughter, and at a time too when I know him engaged to a lady of Miſs Montagu's family and fortune.—O, Mrs. Willoughby, I am aſhamed of theſe arguments ; and if there is no way to be rich without being deſpicable, let us look upon poverty as the moſt eligible of all ſituations.

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

Don't tell me of Miſs Montagu's family, Mr. Willoughby, your daughter is not her inferior in that reſpect ;—beſides, a woman of beauty, educated as I have educated Cornelia, even if ſhe has not altogether ſo much money, has merit enough to deſerve the firſt man in the kingdom. — I am ſure if I was a ſingle woman again ———

WILLOUGHBY.

You have been a ſingle woman, madam, and are now married to a fellow old enough for your father.

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

I don't deſerve to be reproach'd by you, Mr. Willoughby ;—you are, at leaſt, a gainer by my pity.

WILLOUGHBY.

I think ſo, my dear – I think all for the beſt.

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

What all for the beſt; my marrying a man as old as my father?—Have a little gratitude, Mr. Willoughby.

WILLOUGHBY.

Well, well, my dear,—'tis fooliſh for a man and wife to quarrel, becauſe they muſt make it up again.—However, we were here talking of Captain Dormer,—and what is our girl's beauty and education to the purpoſe?

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

Very much to the purpoſe.—They ſhew there would have been no impropriety in ſuffering Captain Dormer to marry Cornelia, and they ſhew that you behav'd very abſurdly in ſtriving to prevent the advancement of your own daughter.

WILLOUGHBY.

Madam, madam, young women are apt enough to err of themſelves, but a father has indeed a great deal to anſwer for, who expoſes his daughter to unneceſſary temptations —Captain Dormer has been already too ſucceſsful in ſome families of our acquaintance; and if, while we are contriving to trap him into a marriage with Cornelia, he ſhould find it poſſible to rob her of her honour, we ſhall be very properly puniſhed for the baſeneſs of our deſigns.

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

And do you think that poſſible, after the ſhare I have had in her education?—tho' I am but her mother-in-law———

WILLOUGHBY.

My good wife, it is by ſuppoſing our own children wiſer than the children of other people, that ſo many are conſtantly ruined.—If we are deſirous, therefore, of preſerving them unſullied,

we

we ſhould always keep them out of danger; — but our ridiculous partiality, conſtantly paints them in the moſt flattering colours of perfection, and we never ſuppoſe them capable of committing the ſmalleſt miſtake, till they are totally undone.

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

Well, it is in vain to talk with you; — but remember I ſay, you will always be the enemy of your own family.

WILLOUGHBY.

I ſhall always endeavour, madam, to act as becomes a father,—but I ſhall alſo ſtrive to act as becomes an honeſt man, — and therefore Captain Dormer ſhall have no more interviews with my daughter.

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

No? ——

WILLOUGHBY.

No.—My avarice ſhall neither lead me to injure the happineſs of my friend's family, nor ſhall my weakneſs betray the honour of my own.—Every thing will, I dare ſay, turn out for the beſt; tho' if the worſt ſhou'd happen, I ſhall ſtill find a conſolation in having taken every juſtifiable method to prevent it. [*Exit.*]

*Enter* Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

O, madam, I have heard all:—what will become of me?

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

Ah, my poor dear child, was there ever ſo prepoſterous a fool as your father!

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

Dear madam, ſay ſomething to comfort me.—You have kindly made yourſelf the confidant of my ſentiments for Captain Dormer, and I muſt be

be the moſt miſerable creature in the world, if my father is inflexibly determined to drive him from the houſe.

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

I can ſay nothing to you, Cornelia, but what muſt add to your regret: — there is no hope of any favourable turn in the affairs of our family: — day after day produces freſh diſappointments; and inſtead of having any agreeable proſpect to cheer us as we go on, the view becomes more and more clouded with misfortunes.—No, there's no enduring life upon theſe terms; — no, there's no poſſibility of enduring it.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

O that I had never ſeen Captain Dormer,—or that he had been leſs amiable! —

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

Ah, my dear child, I know but too well how to pity your diſtreſs: — I have been in love myſelf; ſtrangely as he now neglects my advice, I was once very deſperately in love with your father: — He was the firſt man that ever ſaid a tender thing to me;—and Mexico, if he was dead tomorrow, would not purchaſe a ſingle glance of regard for another, nor the mines of Peru obtain a ſmile of approbation.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

Well, madam, it is happy for me that you have yourſelf been ſuſceptible of the ſofter impreſſions, ſince that ſuſceptibility has induc'd you to aſſiſt me, during my acquaintance with Captain Dormer.

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

It is happy for you, Cornelia, and it ſhall be happy for you.—My tenderneſs is more than the tenderneſs of a ſtep-mother,—and there is nothing I admire ſo much as conſtancy in love. — My thoughts, therefore, have not been idle on this affair, and I believe you will allow my underſtanding to be tollerable.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

The whole world concurs in an opinion of your good-ſenſe, madam, but few entertain a higher idea of it than Captain Dormer.

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

The Captain, my dear, is a man of taſte and diſcernment.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

And yet I muſt give him up for ever.

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

'Tis your own fault;—why won't you take my advice, and make him yours ſecurely?—there is but one way ——

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

O, madam, you know my abhorrence of an elopement——I have often told you——

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

Yes, and I have often told you,—that your father's forgiveneſs may be eaſily obtain'd;—but that Dormer once married to that Harriot Montagu, is loſt for ever.—Do you imagine, child, I wou'd adviſe you to an impropriety?

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

But how can I betray the dignity of my ſex, in propoſing ſo bold a meaſure to the Captain?

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

To be ſure it's very bold in a woman who has given away her heart, to make an honourable offer

fer of her hand to a lover.—However, ſtay child—let poor Dormer be forc'd into this marriage with Miſs Montagu,—let him be torn irrecoverably from you,—and let your obſtinacy, like your father's, continually counteract the happineſs of your family;—were you once Mrs. Dormer, very handſome things might be done for Mr. Willoughby.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

O, madam, don't attack me in ſo tender a point!

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

Come up ſtairs, child;—ſuſpecting your father's buſineſs to Sir John Dormer's this morning, and dreading the conſequence, I have pack'd up all your things ready for an expedition to Scotland:—you muſt determine, therefore, inſtantly;—and if you determine to have Dormer, you muſt act inſtantly too.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

What will become of me!

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

I don't know what will become of you, if you don't take my advice;—and I am ſure, on the preſent occaſion, I give you advice that wou'd be very agreeable to half the young ladies within the bills of mortality. [*Exeunt.*]

*The* SCENE *changes to a Room at* Sir JOHN DORMER'S.

Miſs DORMER *and* Sir GEORGE *diſcovered.*

Sir GEORGE.

Nay, my dear Miſs Dormer, there is no bearing ſo unjuſt an inſenſibility to the power of your own attractions.

Miſs DORMER.

Indeed, Sir George, you over-rate my little merits exceedingly;—and probably the greateſt I can boaſt, is my conſciouſneſs of their being contracted within a very limited circle.

Sir GEORGE.

Well, madam, the very modeſty which induces you to decline every pretenſion to the admiration of the world, is but a freſh proof how greatly you deſerve it.

Miſs DORMER.

You have much politeneſs, Sir George, but politeneſs is your peculiar characteriſtic ———

Sir GEORGE.

At leaſt, madam, I have much ſincerity;—and if Sir John's mediation in my favour, together with as fervent an attachment as ever warm'd the boſom can obtain a look of approbation from Miſs Dormer, ſhe may reſt ſatisfied that the buſineſs of my life, will be an unremitting ſollicitude for the advancement of her happineſs.

Miſs DORMER.

I am infinitely honour'd by this declaration,—and I believe there are not many ladies ———

Sir GEORGE.

Why, madam, if the vanity may be excuſed, I flatter myſelf there are not many ladies who wou'd highly diſapprove my addreſſes. — I have more than once reſiſted ſome flattering overtures, and from very fine women too;—but my heart was reſerv'd for Miſs Dormer, and ſhe will make me the happieſt man exiſting, by kindly condeſcending to accept it.

Miſs DORMER.

I am very ſenſible how juſt a value ſhou'd be

plac'd

plac'd upon such an affection as yours, Sir George, and it gives me no little ———

Sir GEORGE. [*aside.*]

So the Captain imagin'd I shou'd not succeed with her.

Miss DORMER.

You will pardon my confusion, Sir George,—but the declaration I am going to make ———

Sir GEORGE.

Will demand my everlasting gratitude, madam.

Miss DORMER.

I shall be very happy to find you really of this opinion.

Sir GEORGE.

I must be eternally of this opinion; condescension and benignity, madam, are animating every feature of that beautiful face, and I am satisfied you will be prevail'd upon, not utterly to disregard the heart that so passionately solicits your acceptance.

Miss DORMER.

Indeed, Sir George, I must own you are possess'd of extraordinary merit.

Sir GEORGE.

This goodness is too much, madam.

Miss DORMER.

Your understanding is enlarg'd.

Sir GEORGE.

Dear Miss Dormer!

Miss DORMER.

Your person is unexceptionable.

Sir GEORGE.

You distress me, madam, by this excessive generosity.

Miss DORMER.

Your manners are amiable. Sir

Sir GEORGE.

I want words to thank you, madam.

Miſs DORMER.

And your humanity is unbounded.

Sir GEORGE.

What I am, madam, take me:—I am yours and only yours; nor ſhou'd the united graces, if proſtrate at my feet and ſoliciting for pity, rival you a moment in my affection.—No, Miſs Dormer, your happineſs will ever be the ulimate object of my attention, and I ſhall no longer wiſh to exiſt, than while I am ſtudious to promote it.

Miſs DORMER.

Sir George, I fear you miſunderſtand me,—and yet it is in your power to make me very happy.

Sir GEORGE.

How can I miſunderſtand you, my deareſt creature, if it is in my power to make you happy.

Miſs DORMER.

'Tis in your power indeed, Sir George.

Sir GEORGE.

Bewitching lovelineſs, how you tranſport me;—ſo the Captain thought I ſhou'd'nt ſucceed with her. [*aſide.*]

Miſs DORMER.

But if you wou'd wiſh to ſee me happy,——you muſt withdraw your addreſſes.

Sir GEORGE.

Miſs Dormer!

Miſs DORMER.

It is impoſſible for me ever to return your affection.

Sir GEORGE.

Miſs Dormer!

Miſs

Miſs DORMER.

And I ſhall be miſerable beyond belief by a continuance of your ſollicitation.

Sir GEORGE.

Miſs Dormer!

Miſs DORMER.

O, Sir George, to the greatneſs of your humanity let me appeal againſt the prepoſſeſſion of your heart. — You ſee before you a diſtreſſed young creature, whoſe affection is already engaged; — and who, tho' ſhe thinks herſelf highly honoured by your ſentiments, is wholly unable to return them.

Sir GEORGE.

I am extremely ſorry, madam,—to have been —I ſay, madam,—that—really I am ſo exceedingly diſconcerted, that I don't know what to ſay. ———

Miſs DORMER.

O, Sir George, you have no occaſion for apologies, tho' I have unhappily too much;—but I know the nicety of your honour, and I depend upon it with ſecurity.—Let me then entreat an additional act of goodneſs at your hands, which is abſolutely neceſſary, as well for my peace, as for my father's: — this is to contrive ſuch a method of withdrawing your addreſſes, as will not expoſe me to his diſpleaſure.—Let the diſcontinuance of them appear, not to be the reſult of my requeſt, but the conſequence of your own determination; he is a zealous advocate for you, and I ſhou'd incur his ſevereſt reſentment, if he was to be acquainted with the real impediment to the match. — You are diſtreſſed, Sir George, and I am ſinking with confuſion; —I ſhall therefore only add that I truſt you with more than life, and that I conjure you to compaſſionate

paſſionate my ſituation. — By this conduct you will engage my eternal eſteem, and merit that happineſs with a much more deſerving woman, which it is impoſſible for you ever to enjoy with me. [*Exit.*]

Sir GEORGE.

What is all this! — a dream! —— No, 'tis no dream, and I feel myſelf awake but too ſenſibly. — What then, am I rejected, deſpis'd, where I ſuppos'd myſelf certain of ſucceſs and approbation.—This is too much;—neither my pride nor my tenderneſs can ſupport the indignity,—and I ſhall—what ſhall I do? Shall I meanly betray the poor girl who has generouſly thrown herſelf upon my humanity, and convince the world by ſuch a conduct that ſhe was right in refuſing me:—no, damn it—I ſcorn a littleneſs of that nature, and I muſt ſhew myſelf worthy of her affection, tho' her unfortunate pre-engagement wou'd not ſuffer me to obtain it. But how in the name of perplexity ſhall I manage the matter?—A refuſal on my ſide neceſſarily incurs the general reſentment of the family, and the cenſure of the world into the bargain; — ſo that in all probability I ſhall not only have the honour of riſquing my life but my reputation, and this for the happineſs of giving the woman I admire to the arms of my rival. ——Really the proſpect is a very comfortable one. [*Exit.*]

*Enter* Miſs MONTAGU *and* Miſs DORMER.

Miſs MONTAGU.

Upon my word, Caroline, you have acted a very heroic part;—but this unaccountable love is able to carry the moſt timid of the romantic ladies thro' the greateſt difficulties.—Now had I

been

been in your ſituation, I cou'd no more have aſk'd the man to take my fault upon himſelf, than I cou'd have made downright love to him.

Miſs DORMER.

Ah, Harriot, you little know to what extremities a ſtrong prepoſſeſſion is capable of driving a woman, even where there is the moſt evident impoſſibility of ever obtaining the object of her inclinations.

Miſs MONTAGU.

O, my dear, I ſee very plainly that it is capable of driving a woman to very great extremities.

Miſs DORMER.

Well I am convinc'd that if any thing was to prevent your marriage with my brother, you wou'd, notwithſtanding this ſeeming inſenſibility, look upon the reſt of his ſex with the utmoſt averſion.

Miſs MONTAGU.

I wonder, Caroline, after my repeated declarations of indifference with regard to your brother, that you can imagine I conſider him with the ſmalleſt partiality.—There was indeed a time when I might have been prevailed upon to endure the creature,—but his negligence quickly alarmed my pride, and prevented me from ſquandering a ſingle ſentiment of tenderneſs, upon a man who ſeem'd ſo little inclin'd to deſerve it.

Miſs DORMER.

Well, my dear, I am in hopes that you will have but little reaſon to blame his negligence for the future,—becauſe I know he intends this very day to ſolicit your approbation.

Miſs MONTAGU.

O he does me infinite honour, and I ſuppoſe you imagine he is entitled to one of my beſt curt-

ſies for ſo extraordinary an inſtance of his condeſcenſion;—but, Caroline, I am not altogether ſo critically ſituated as to be glad of a huſband at any rate,—nor have I ſuch a meanneſs of diſpoſition as to favour any addreſſes which are made to me with a viſible reluctance.

Miſs DORMER.

A viſible reluctance, my dear ——?

Miſs MONTAGU.

Yes, Caroline, a viſible reluctance.——'Tis true indeed there are a good many kind-hearted creatures who can ſtoop to flatter a fellow's vanity, even while he treats them with contempt;—but I am made of different materials, my dear, —— I love to mortify the preſumption of thoſe confident puppies, who aſk my hand with as much familiarity as if they aſk'd a pinch of ſnuff, and ſeem to ſay, "ſo child, I want to make you the "upper ſervant of my family."

Miſs DORMER.

You are a whimſical creature, Harriot, — but how can you contrive to invalidate the contract between my brother and you, if you are even ſerious in your determination?

Miſs MONTAGU.

If I can gueſs right, your brother will himſelf find a very expeditious method of breaking it.—However, if he ſhou'd not, I am in no great hurry for a tyrant, and my Strephon's impudent brow ſhall be pretty well loaded with wrinkles, before he finds me in the humour of ſaying, "whenever you pleaſe, good Sir,—and I am "very much oblig'd to you."

Miſs DORMER.

Well, well, Jack muſt ſolicit for himſelf, and I am ſure, notwithſtanding this pretended want

of

of feeling, you are no way deſtitute of good-nature and ſenſibility.

Miſs MONTAGU.

Good-nature and ſenſibility, Caroline;——ay, 'tis this good-nature and ſenſibility that makes the men ſo intolerably vain, and renders us ſo frequently contemptible.——If a fellow treats us with ever ſo much inſolence, he has only to burſt into a paſſionate rant, and tell a groſs lie with a prodigious agitation;—— in proportion as he whines we become ſoftened; till at laſt, burſting into tears, we bid the ſweet creature riſe,—tell him that our fortune is entirely at his ſervice, and beg that he will immediately aſſume the power of making us compleatly miſerable

Miſs DORMER.

What a picture!

Miſs MONTAGU.

While he, ſcarcely able to ſtifle his laughter, retires to divert his diſſolute companions with our weakneſs, and breaking into a yawn of inſolent affectation, cries, "poor fool ſhe's doatingly fond of me."—However, Caroline, to convince you at once with regard to my ſentiments for your brother ——

Miſs DORMER.

Well!

Miſs MONTAGU.

Let me tell you now you have determin'd againſt Sir George, that this very coxcomb as you call him, this Narciſſus, who can love nothing but himſelf, according to your account ——

Miſs DORMER.

Aſtoniſhment!

Miſs MONTAGU.

Is the only man I ſhall ever think of ſeriouſly —

There, wonder,—be amaz'd that I don't ſee with your eyes,—and deſpiſe my want of taſte;—I'm a mad girl, you know, and poſſibly like Sir George for his peculiarities,—but ſtill foibles are leſs culpable than faults, Caroline, and the vanities even of a coxcomb are more eaſily cured than the vices of a libertine.

*Enter a* FOOTMAN.

FOOTMAN.

Mr. Villars ladies, ſends his compliments, and is ready if you are diſengaged, to play over the new air which you commended laſt night at the pera.

Miſs DORMER.

O we'll wait upon him inſtantly.

[*Exit Footman.*]

Miſs MONTAGU. [*ludicrouſly.*]

O yes, we'll wait upon him inſtantly!

Miſs DORMER.

How can you be ſo provoking, Harriot?

Miſs MONTAGU.

What, provoking to wait upon your Corydon inſtantly.—Come, my ſweet ſhepherdeſs, let me ſhew it to the parlour. [*Exeunt.*]

*The* SCENE *changes to* WILLOUGHBY'S.

*Enter* Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

Mr. Willoughby is return'd I find, and has got the letter Cornelia left for him.—Well, by this time ſhe's with her huſband that is to be, and will, I ſuppoſe, be ſpeedily on her journey.—The Captain can't recede now, and let his father be pleaſed or diſpleaſed, he is ſtill heir to his title and fortune.—What a difficulty I had to ſhew her the neceſſity,—nay the propriety of this meaſure;—fond

fond as she is of Dormer, it was hardly possible to engage her in it, and she seem'd at one time more determin'd to give him up for ever, than betray the dignity of the female character. —Dignity indeed—I think I know what belongs to female dignity, as well as most people;—these very young girls, however, are strange creatures; — their nicety is not in the least wounded when they tell a man they love him.—But O 'tis a deviation from dignity to own they wish him for a husband.——Here comes Mr. Willoughby; —he mus'nt know my share in this transaction 'till he finds himself happy in the good consequences, and owns there is at least one sensible head in the family.

*Enter* WILLOUGHBY. [*speaking to a servant behind.*]

WILLOUGHBY.

Let a coach be call'd directly,——she must certainly be gone off to this libertine Dormer.

Mrs. WILLOUGABY.

Well, have your elevated notions done you any service, or has all turn'd out for the best now?

WILLOUGHBY.

Madam, madam, don't distract me, — don't distract me,—I am sufficiently miserable without these unnecessary reproaches.

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

O you are! I am heartily glad of it ——

WILLOUGHBY.

Yet something whispers at my heart that all will still turn out for the best ——

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

Indeed!

WILLOUGHBY.

Yes,—the dispensations of providence are always

ways founded on juſtice;——and none are ever ſufferers in the end, but thoſe who have merited the utmoſt ſeverity from its hands.

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

Fine philoſophy truly;——and I ſuppoſe you wou'd have thought it for the beſt if you had loſt me, as well as your daughter?

WILLOUGHBY. [*ironically.*]

I wou'd have tried at leaſt, madam, to be as eaſy as poſſible under ſo great a misfortune.

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

You wou'd you barbarous man,——but you are miſerable enough without ſuch a circumſtance, and that's ſome comfort to me.——Your obſtinacy has made your only child deſperate, and you have thought it better to run the hazard of her ruin, than to eſtabliſh her happineſs on a certain foundation.

WILLOUGHBY.

I tell you, madam, any diſtreſs is preferable to the perpetration of a crime; and there was no way of acting upon your principles, without the blackeſt ingratitude to the common benefactor of my family.——I feel for the indiſcretion of this unhappy girl with the ſevereſt poignancy, but I rejoice that my partiality for her led the father into no action that could impeach the probity of the man.

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

Mighty fine.

WILLOUGHBY.

This, madam, is a conſolation, a great conſolation in this hour of affection; and let me tell you that in the ſevereſt trials, the truly honeſt feel a ſatisfaction, which is never experienced in the moſt flattering moments of a guilty proſperity.

Mrs.

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

Well, well, follow your own courſe, and anſwer for the conſequences.—Had my advice been taken, — but who indeed takes ſenſible advice now-a-days;—you never took my advice in your life, and you ſee what the effect has proved to your unfortunate family.

WILLOUGHBY.

A truce with your wiſdom, madam, I beſeech you; for if it only teaches you to be worthleſs, it wou'd be happy for you to be the greateſt idiot in the kingdom:—but I have no time to waſte in words, every poſſible meaſure muſt be taken for the recovery of this infatuated girl —

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

And ſuppoſe you ſhou'd not be able to recover this infatuated girl as you call her,—what medicine will your philoſophy in that caſe adminiſter for ſo great a misfortune.

WILLOUGHBY.

The beſt of all medicines,—the conſciouſneſs of having never deſerv'd it. [*Exit.*]

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

Why you ill-bred brute won't you take me along with you.—I muſt go with him to ſee that every thing is conducted with propriety. [*Exit.*]

*The* END *of the* SECOND ACT.

ACT

# ACT III.

## SCENE *the Park.*

VILLARS *alone.*

INTO how very hopeleſs a ſituation has my fortune at laſt plung'd me, and how unluckily has the very accident which I conſider'd as the moſt happy circumſtance of my life, turn'd out a ſource of diſappointment and diſtreſs. — Here, while I was rejoicing on being entertained by Sir John Dormer, was it poſſible for me to ſuppoſe that his amiable daughter wou'd have made ſo abſolute a conqueſt of my heart. — But on the other hand, was it poſſible to ſee ſo much ſweetneſs, affability, and merit, without the warmeſt admiration? — Yet to what purpoſe do I continually indulge myſelf in thinking of Miſs Dormer?—My lot in life is as precarious as it is poor, whereas ſhe is entitled to cheriſh the nobleſt expectations.——'Tis true indeed, Captain Dormer has favour'd me with his friendſhip, and I am in hourly hope of an enſigncy by his means—And will an enſigncy——No——I'll lock the ſecret eternally in my boſom, and ſince I cannot raiſe myſelf up to the importance of her proſpects, ſhe ſhall never be reduc'd to the penury of mine.

*Enter* DORMER.

DORMER.

All alive and merry, my dear Villars, I am now in caſh enough; but here my boy is the commiſſion I have been ſoliciting for you.——'Tis juſt ſign'd,—and you muſt do me the additional favour of accepting this note to buy regimentals.

VIL-

VILLARS.

You overwhelm me with this generosity —

DORMER.

Nay, no hesitating, —you shall give me a draft upon the agent for the money, or do any thing your ridiculous nicety requires, so you only condescend to oblige me.

VILLARS.

I am at a loss for words to ———

DORMER.

I am very glad of it, as I don't want to be thank'd for an act of common justice; the necessities of the worthy have a constant claim upon the superfluities of the rich, and we in reality only pay a debt, where the world imagines we confer an obligation.

VILLARS.

This way of thinking is so noble, that ———

DORMER.

Poh,—poh,—poh man, let's have none of these elaborate acknowledgements, especially at this time——when I have news for you;——such news, ——wou'd you believe it, Miss Willoughby has actually left her father, and is now at my private lodgings in Pall-mall.

VILLARS.

You astonish me!

DORMER.

Read this letter, and it will inform you of every thing.

VILLARS *reads.*

"My dearest Dormer, my unrelenting father "has this morning commanded me, never to re- "ceive a visit from you more ——

DORMER.

There's a touch of the pathetic, Villars. —— My unrelenting father has this morning commanded me, never to receive a visit from you more. [*ludicrously.*]

VILLARS.

" But there's no possibility of existing without " my Dormer ——

DORMER.

But there's no possibility of existing without my Dormer.

VILLARS.

" I have therefore sent some cloathes, and a " few ornaments, to the house in Pall-mall, " where I have occasionally met him, and shall " follow them immediately myself ——

DORMER.

And shall follow them immediately myself.—— Ay, there she drops the heroic, and sensibly proceeds to business.

VILLARS.

" If my Dormer's passion is as sincere and as " honourable as I think it, he will take instant " measures for carrying me to Scotland ——

DORMER.

No—Scotland is too far to the north, Villars —too far to the north—but mind what follows.

VILLARS.

" And put it out of the power of the most ma- " lignant destiny ——

DORMER.

There she's in heroics again, Villars.

VILLARS.

" To rob him of his Cornelia Willoughby."

DORMER.

To rob him of his Cornelia Willoughby.—O you must speak that with all the emphasis of tragedy

gedy tenderneſs, man :——your voice muſt be broken,——your boſom muſt be thump'd,——your eyes muſt be fix'd.——Zounds it will never do without a deal of the paſſionate.

VILLARS.

How can you turn a woman into ridicule, whoſe partiality for yourſelf, is the only cauſe of her indiſcretion ?

DORMER.

And how can you ſuppoſe that her partiality for me, ſhou'd render me blind to the impropriety of her conduct ?——I can ſee when a woman plays the fool with myſelf, as ſoon as when ſhe plays it with other people.

VILLARS.

Well, but what do you intend to do, you ſee her elopement is upon an abſolute ſuppoſition of your intending to marry her ?

DORMER.

I don't know that, nor do I ſee how I am bound to take more care of a lady's honour, than ſhe chooſes to take herſelf.——But even admitting the force of your ſuppoſition, what can I do ? ——It is not in my power to marry her, ſhe knows herſelf it is not in my power, and I ſhou'd cut a very ridiculous figure in the eye of the world, if after a fine girl threw herſelf voluntarily into my arms, with a perfect knowledge of my ſituation, I was to read her a lecture of morality with a prim, puritanical phyz, and to cry, " you ſhan't ſtay " with me, Miſs, you muſt go home and be du- " tiful to your papa."

VILLARS.

My dear Captain, a fond woman always judges of her lover by herſelf ; and Miſs Willoughby imagines, becauſe ſhe is ready to run any riſk for

your ſake, that you will as readily run any hazard for her's,——ſhe therefore truſts you ——

DORMER.

Zounds, Villars, how prepoſterouſly you argue; ——doesn't every woman who truſts entirely to the diſcretion of a lover,——truſt a robber with her purſe, and an enemy with her reputation? A woman of real principle will never put it into a man's power to be perfidious, and I ſhou'd not care to truſt any of theſe eloping damſels with my honour, who are ſuch miſerable guardians of their own.

VILLARS.

You are a very extrrordinary man indeed, to think meanly of a woman, for giving you the greateſt proof which ſhe can poſſibly ſhew of her affection.

DORMER.

I muſt think meanly of any woman who, gives me an improper proof of her affection, tho' I may be inclin'd to take an advantage of it.

VILLARS.

Indeed!

DORMER.

O, Villars, if the women did but know how we doat upon them for keeping us at a ſenſible diſtance, and how we deſpiſe them where they are forwardly fond, their very pride wou'd ſerve them in the room of reaſon, and they would learn to be prudent even from the greatneſs of their vanity.

VILLARS.

So then you think Miſs Willoughby fair game, now ſhe has ——

DORMER.

Undoubtedly;——formerly, indeed, I had ſome ſcruples on her father's account,——but now ſhe has

has gone this length, there is no resisting the temptation.——As I told you before, Villars, she knows I can't marry her, she knows I am already engag'd,——and what the devil do you think she wants with me——hey?

VILLARS.

Why but ——

DORMER.

Why but,——why but what? Only consider man what a mind a woman must have, who can plunge her whole family in wretchedness for any fellow's sake; honour believe me, Villars, never took root in a bosom which is dead to the feelings of nature; nor are those in the least to be pitied who are willingly destroy'd.

VILLARS.

Well, well, I stay still ——

DORMER.

But well, well,——I hav'nt time to hear what you wou'd say,——for I want you to go to Pall-mall directly to see that Miss Willoughby is properly accommodated.——I know the moment she is miss'd I shall be suspected, so I'll go to my father's and be in the way there, to save appearances as much as possible,

VILLARS.

Why hav'nt you been at Pall-mall yourself to receive her?

DORMER.

Yes, but I had only time to take a few trifling liberties,——and I am now going to make love very much against my inclination to Miss Montagu——My father read me a damn'd severe lecture this morning, and the best way of preventing any suspicion from fastening on me about Miss Willoughby, is to shew every mark of readiness to comply

comply with his inclinations;—but go, my dear boy, about the buſineſs, and I'll do as much for you, whene'er a pretty woman brings you into difficulties.

VILLARS.

O, I am much oblig'd to you.

DORMER.

The people of the houſe will admit you directly;—and remember, that a trifling lie or two muſt choak neither of us, if any body ſhou'd queſtion us about the little run-away.

[*Exeunt ſeverally.*]

SCENE *changes to Sir* JOHN DORMER'S.

*Enter* Sir GEORGE.

Sir GEORGE.

Why how the plague ſhall I act in this affair,—or with what face can I poſſibly tell Sir John that I am deſirous of declining an alliance with his family, after I have ſo repeatedly ſolicited his influence with Miſs Dormer.—I promiſed to wait till he return'd from the Cocoa-tree—I wiſh he was come back with all my heart—for my preſent ſituation is none of the moſt agreeable.—Upon my word it was a mighty modeſt requeſt of the young lady, at the very moment ſhe refus'd me, to deſire I wou'd take the whole blame upon myſelf.—Your women of ſentiment, however, have a very extraordinary manner of doing things—O but here comes Sir John, what the devil ſhall I ſay to him.

*Enter* Sir JOHN.

Sir George I give you joy,—joy a thouſand times.—I met Caroline as I was coming up ſtairs, and by her ſilence as well as bluſhing, I

read

read her readineſs to comply with my wiſhes, and find her the excellent girl I always imagin'd her.

Sir GEORGE.

She is a very excellent young lady indeed, and I am very much oblig'd to her.

Sir JOHN.

You can't now, conceive the tranſport of my heart at her chearful concurrence, but I hope you will one day experience, that a dutiful child is the firſt of all human felicities.

Sir GEORGE.

It muſt be a very great happineſs indeed, Sir John.

Sir JOHN.

Well, Sir George, our lawyers ſhall meet this very evening, and every thing ſhall be ſettled to our mutual ſatisfaction.

Sir GEORGE.

Yes, Sir John, I wiſh to ſettle every thing to your ſatisfaction.

Sir JOHN.

There will be no great occaſion for expenſive preparations.

Sir GEORGE.

O none in the world, none in the world.

Sir JOHN.

I don't ſee any neceſſity you have to move out of our preſent houſe in Berkeley-ſquare.

Sir GEORGE.

Nor I either.

Sir JOHN.

You have room enough there.

Sir GEORGE.

Plenty.

Sir JOHN.

Why what's the matter, Sir George, you ſpeak with an air of coldneſs and embarraſſment that ſurprizes me?

Sir

Sir GEORGE.

Sir John, I am incapable of a duplicity.

Sir JOHN.

Well.

Sir GEORGE.

And notwithſtanding my wiſhes for Miſs Dormer are as ardent as ſhe is deſerving,——a circumſtance has happen'd, which muſt for ever deny me the bleſſing of her hand.

Sir JOHN.

You aſtoniſh me!——but what circumſtance——ſhe is ready ——

Sir GEORGE.

Yes, yes, ſhe is very ready, Sir John.

Sir JOHN.

Then pray acquaint me with the impediment.

Sir GEORGE.

My dear Sir John, a point, a very nice point of honour prevents the poſſibility of my indulging you in this requeſt: you may, however, ſafely aſſure yourſelf that I am now no leſs worthy of your good opinion, than when you favour'd me with the warmeſt recommendation to Miſs Dormer.

Sir JOHN.

Mighty well, Sir George, mighty well,——and ſo you come into my houſe to ſolicit my influence in your favour, over the affections of my daughter, obtain her approbation, and then, without producing one cauſe for a change in your ſentiments, affront us both in the groſſeſt manner, by inſtantly receding from your engagements.

Sir

Sir GEORGE.

You are warm, Sir John.

Sir JOHN.

Have I not abundant cauſe for warmth, when you deny a reaſon for the affront which on this occaſion you have offered to my family. — If you know any thing in my daughter's conduct that renders her unworthy of your alliance, pronounce it freely — and I ſhall myſelf be the firſt to approve your rejection of her. — But, Sir George, if you capriciouſly decline a treaty which you yourſelf took ſo much pains to commence, without aſſigning a ſufficient cauſe for your behaviour; be aſſur'd I will have ample ſatisfaction. — Nor ſhall the altar itſelf protect you from the united vengeance of an injur'd friend and an inſulted father.

Sir GEORGE.

Sir John, I eaſily conceive the purport of this menace: — but whatever meaſures you intend to take, let me tell you, I ſhall one day have your thanks for the conduct which now excites your indignation; and, let me alſo tell you, that the very moment in which your hand is raiſed againſt my life, will be the moment in which I ſhall prove myſelf the trueſt friend to your family.

Sir JOHN.

Away, away, you are all profeſſion and falſhood. — My daughter told me that you were incapable of loving any thing but yourſelf.

Sir GEORGE.

I thank her very heartily, Sir.

Sir JOHN.

And that the wiſhes of your heart were entirely centred in the admiration of your own adorable perſon.

Sir GEORGE.

O, I am infinitely oblig'd to her.

Sir JOHN.

But insignificant, as she justly represented you—

Sir GEORGE.

Insignificant!

Sir JOHN.

That insignificence shall not be your protection.

Sir GEORGE.

My protection! — So, I want to be protected!

Sir JOHN.

Therefore, unless you wou'd prove yourself as destitute of courage as of honour, meet me at the Cocoa-tree in an hour; we can easily have a private room, and, if you fail, I shall set such a stigma on the coward, as will render him a scorn even to the greatest profligate in the kingdom.

[*Exit.*

Sir GEORGE.

So — now I am engag'd in a pretty piece of business — and must hazard my life for a woman, who has not only rejected my addresses, but mention'd me with contempt; and danger join'd to insult is my reward, where, in reality, I ought to meet with thanks and approbation, la la la la lalla, *(hums a French air)* — Well, be it as it will, Miss Dormer's secret shall be inviolably preserv'd. — A thrust through the guts is, to be sure, disagreeable enough, but if fellows every day hazard it in defence of the basest actions, there can be no mighty heroism in running a little risque, to support the cause of honour and generosity. [*Exit.*

SCENE,

SCENE, DORMER's *Lodgings in* Pall-Mall.

*Enter* Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

Where ſhall I hide my miſerable head, or how ſhall I avoid the ſtroke of impending deſtruction. — The man who ſhou'd have been the guardian, is himſelf the perſon that attacks my honour, and the unlimited confidence which I raſhly repos'd in his affection, is now made uſe of to cover me with diſgrace. — O that my unhappy ſex would learn a little prudence, and be well convinc'd, when they fly from the imaginary oppreſſion of a father, that they are not ſeeking protection from the moſt cruel of all enemies, thoſe who mean to ſacrifice their peace, and blaſt their reputation.

*Enter* LUCY.

LUCY.

Madam, there is a Gentleman from Captain Dormer come to wait upon you.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

What can he want with me?

LUCY.

I really can't ſay, Madam. — But, if you pleaſe, I'll ſend him up, and then you can know his buſineſs from himſelf.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY. [*Walking about in diſorder.*]

How am I inſulted and expos'd! But the woman deſerves no reſpect from others, who does not ſhew a proper regard for her own character.

LUCY. [*Aſide.*]

Lord! what a mighty fuſs we make, though I don't ſee we are a bit handſomer than other people. — Well, Madam, what ſhall I ſay to the gentleman?

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

Shew the gentleman up.

LUCY. [*Pertly.*]

Yes, Madam. [*Exit.*

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

Whoever he is he cannot increaſe my fears, and may poſſibly bring me ſome intelligence to mitigate their ſeverity.

*Enter* VILLARS.

VILLARS.

Madam, your moſt obedient. — I wait upon you with Captain Dormer's reſpects, to apologize for his unavoidable abſence a few hours, and to hope that every thing here is quite to your ſatisfaction.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

As the Captain, Sir, has engag'd your good offices on this occaſion, I ſuppoſe you are acquainted with the hiſtory of my indiſcretion.

VILLARS.

The Captain, Madam, gave me no particular account of matters, but only ſent me as a friend, on whoſe ſecreſy he cou'd rely, to apologize for his abſence, and to enquire how you approved of this ſituation.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY. [*With emotion.*]

Sir, I don't approve of this ſituation at all.

VILLARS.

I ſhou'd be ſorry, Madam, that my preſence diſtreſſed you.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

'Tis not your preſence, Sir, which diſtreſſes me, 'tis the conſciouſneſs of my own folly; 'tis the danger to which I have expos'd myſelf. — But, Sir, your appearance is the appearance of humanity; and I think you look with compaſſion on an unhappy young creature, whom the perfidy of a man too tenderly eſteem'd, has devoted to diſtruction; if you do, Sir, ſave me — I conjure you, by all you hold moſt dear, to ſave me from diſhonour.

honour. — I have been indiſcreet, but not criminal, and the purity of my intention has ſome claim to pity, though the raſhneſs of my flight may be wholly without excuſe.

VILLARS.

Be compos'd, Madam — Pray be compoſed — You affect me exceedingly. — And you ſhall find a protector in me, if you have any juſt cauſe to apprehend the leaſt violence from Captain Dormer.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

If I have any cauſe, Sir. — Why, inſtead of proceeding with me to a place where we might be ſecurely united, am I detained in this unaccountable houſe? — Why did he here attempt liberties, that muſt be ſhocking to the mind of ſenſibility? — And why at his departure did he give the people here orders to confine me to theſe apartments.

VILLARS.

You feel too ſtrongly, Madam.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

Can I feel too ſtrongly, Sir, where my everlaſting peace of mind is deſtroy'd; and where the man who declared he only exiſted for my ſake, is cruelly induſtrious to plunge me into infamy? — Unknowing in the ways of the world, I cou'd not diſtinguiſh between the language of ſincerity, and the voice of diſſimulation. — By my own integrity I judg'd of his truth, and cou'd not think that any man wou'd be monſter enough to return a tender partiality for himſelf with diſgrace and deſtruction.

VILLARS.

Madam, there is ſomething in your manner — there is ſomething in this generous indignation

that

that diſpoſes me very warmly to ſerve you, and if you really deſire to leave this houſe, you ſhall leave it inſtantly; the people have directions to obey me in every thing, and I do not think myſelf oblig'd to anſwer Mr. Dormer's expectations, where his demands are evidently contrary to the principles of virtue.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

Sir you charm me with theſe ſentiments.

VILLARS.

Madam, they are ſentiments which ſhould regulate the conduct of every man; for he who ſuffers a bad action to be committed when he has the power of preventing it, is, in my opinion, as guilty as the actual perpetrator of the crime.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

I am eternally indebted to this generoſity, Sir.

VILLARS.

Not in the leaſt, Madam. — For, abſtracted from my general abhorrence of what is indefenſible, I find, I know not how, an irreſiſtable inclination to ſerve you. — But we loſe time. — I'll order a coach directly to the door, and leave you at perfect liberty to follow your own inclinations.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

I have a fix'd reliance on your honour, Sir, and only lament that I have nothing but thanks to ſhew my gratitude for this goodneſs.

VILLARS.

My dear Madam, your thanks are more than I deſerve. What I have done, humanity made my duty; and the moſt contemptible of mankind, is he who declines the performance of a good action becauſe he has not an expectation of being rewarded.

END *of the* THIRD ACT.

ACT

# ACT IV.

## SCENE, *Sir* JOHN DORMER'S.

*Enter* DORMER *followed by* WILLOUGHBY.

WILLOUGHBY.

CAPTAIN Dormer, don't keep me on the rack, but give me up my daughter.

DORMER.

Sir, I have repeatedly told you—

WILLOUGHBY.

Yes, Sir, you have repeatedly told me, that you are wholly unconcern'd in her flight—But this is the only thing in which I cou'd find it any way difficult to believe you.

DORMER.

Mr. Willoughby, this doubt of my veracity is neither kind nor delicate.

WILLOUGHBY.

Don't inſult me, Captain Dormer, while you are loading me with calamity, or poſſibly I may forget that you are the ſon of my benefactor.—However, Sir, I do not come here to menace, but to ſupplicate.—I do not come here to provoke the warmth of your temper, but to intereſt the ſenſibility of your heart.—You ſee me a diſtreſs'd, unfortunate, miſerable old man.—The whole happineſs of my life is wrapp'd up in the inconſiderate girl you have ſtolen from my arms—and if ſhe is not inſtantly return'd, my portion will be diſtraction.—Reſtore her therefore, I beſeech you, and reſtore her while ſhe is innocent.—The

blow

blow is a barbarous one, which is aim'd at the boſom of a friend; and the triumph is deſpicable indeed, which is purchaſed at the expence of humanity.

DORMER. [*Aſide.*]

Why, how contemptible a raſcal is a libertine!

WILLOUGHBY.

For pity's ſake give me back my child; nor deſtroy, in your giddy purſuit of pleaſure, the eternal peace of a man who wou'd readily riſque his life for the advancement of your happineſs. — You have generoſity, Captain Dormer, and you have underſtanding — yet you combat the natural benevolence of your heart, and oppoſe the evident ſenſe of your own conviction: You are cruel, becauſe it is gallant; and you are licentious, becauſe it is faſhionable. — But, Sir, let my diſtreſs, my anguiſh, reſtore you to yourſelf, and teach you, in ſome meaſure, to anticipate the feelings of a father. Early in life an only ſon was taken from me; and the evening of my days is now to be mark'd with the pollution of an only daughter. — O! Mr. Dormer, you men of pleaſure know not how wide a ruin you ſpread in the progreſs of your unwarrantable inclinations. — You do not recollect, that, beſides the unhappy victim ſacrific'd, there is a family to participate in her injuries; a mother, perhaps to die at her deſtruction, and a wretch like me to madden at her diſgrace.

DORMER.

I cannot be the raſcal I intended. [*Aſide.*] Sir, — Mr. Willoughby, be ſatisfied. — Miſs Willoughby is ſafe and well — nor ſhall I ever entertain a wiſh to diſturb your happineſs, or to injure her reputation.

WILLOUGHBY.

Eternal bleſſings on you for this generous declaration. — But, if you ſpeak your real ſentiments, conduct me inſtantly to my child.

DORMER.

With pleaſure, Sir — and I have great reaſon to imagine, that the anxiety ſhe has ſuffer'd in conſequence of this little Indiſcretion, will make her additionally worthy of your affection.

WILLOUGHBY.

Why, I always ſaid, that every thing happens for the beſt; and that many accidents are really bleſſings in diſguiſe, which we lament as abſolute misfortunes.

DORMER.

Your philoſophy will be juſtified in the preſent caſe, I aſſure you.

WILLOUGHBY.

Give me your hand, Captain. — I eſteem you more than ever. — But come; I am impatient to ſee my poor girl. — Her fault was the reſult of her inexperience; and if we were all to be puniſh'd for the errors of indiſcretion, what wou'd become of the beſt of us?

DORMER.

Juſtly conſider'd, Sir.

WILLOUGHBY.

Come along, come along, man: I want to be gone — and my miſerable wife, whom I didn't care to bring in, for fear ſhe ſhou'd be clamorous, waits for me in a coach at the end of the ſtreet.

DORMER.

I attend you, Sir — yet, if half the gay fellows about town were inform'd of the buſineſs I am going upon — I fancy they'd laugh at me pretty heartily.

WILLOUGHBY.

Ah, Captain! a man of ſenſe ſhou'd deſpiſe the ridicule of the profligate, and recollect, that the laughter of a thouſand fools is by no means ſo cutting as the ſeverity of his own deteſtation.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE *changes to another Apartment in Sir* JOHN DORMER'S.

*Enter Miſs* MONTAGU *and Miſs* WILLOUGHBY.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

Thus, my dear Madam, have I given you the whole hiſtory of my infatuation; and I have now only to repeat my ſincere concern for thinking it poſſible that Captain Dormer cou'd be inſenſible of your very great merit, and to intreat the favour of your interpoſition with my father.

Miſs MONTAGU.

My dear girl, there is no occaſion whatſoever for this generous apology.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

Indeed, Madam, there is—I was unpardonably vain in attempting to diſpute a heart with you, and I was extremely culpable, in forgetting how much the completion of my own wiſhes might diſturb the peace of a family, to which my father had ſo many obligations.

Miſs MONTAGU.

My dear Miſs Willoughby, we women are all fools when we are in love, and it is but natural that our own happineſs ſhou'd be more immediately the object of our attention than the happineſs of other people—But I want to aſk you a queſtion about this recreant of ours, to which I beg you will give me an ingenuous anſwer.

Miſs

Miſs WILLOUHGBY.

Pray propoſe your queſtion, Madam.

Miſs MONTAGU.

Then, my dear, ſuppoſe matters cou'd be ſo brought about, that Sir John wou'd approve the Captain's attachment to you, cou'd you, tell me candidly, forgive the inſolent uſe which he has juſt made of your generoſity?

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

Dear Miſs Montagu, why do you aſk me ſuch a queſtion?

Miſs MONTAGU.

Becauſe I am pretty ſure you may ſtill have him, if you think him worth your acceptance.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

I really don't underſtand you.

Miſs MONTAGU.

You ſhall underſtand me then—I never will marry Captain Dormer.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

Madam!

Miſs MONTAGU.

He's not a man to my taſte.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

No!

Miſs MONTAGU.

No—he is worſe to me, to make uſe of an affected ſimile, than prepar'd chicken gloves, or almond paſte.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

Indeed!

Miſs MONTAGU.

Yes—he is more offenſive than Naples dew, or Venitian cream, the eſſence of daffodil, or the Imperial milk of roſes.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

You can't be ſerious ſurely—not like him!

Miſs MONTAGU.

No, poſitively, I do not like him.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

Why, where can there be ſo—

Miſs MONTAGU.

O bravo.

" Is he not more than painting can expreſs,
" Or youthful poets fancy when they love."

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

You reprove me very juſtly, Madam—and I bluſh to ſpeak of a man with ſoftneſs, whom I ſhou'd always conſider with indignation.

Miſs MONTAGU.

Come, come, my dear, the Captain is a very agreeable young fellow after all—But I know he is as indifferent about me, as I can poſſibly be about him, and I ſhou'd never have a ſyllable of the tender kind from him—if he was not extremely unwilling to diſoblige his father.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

Has he yet declar'd himſelf, Madam?

Miſs MONTAGU.

Why, not expreſſly—but I expect him every moment to open with the uſual formality, and if you pleaſe, we can not only render the ſcene a whimſical one, but make him ſmart very ſenſibly for the liberties of this morning.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

In what manner pray?

Miſs MONTAGU.

Why the moment he comes, you ſhall retire into this cloſet—and in the midſt of all his profeſſions to me, I ſhall take an opportunity of mentioning

tioning your name with an air of jealous reſentment.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

Well!

Miſs MONTAGU.

This I am ſure will induce him to make violent proteſtations, that this heav'nly face of mine alone is the object of his adoration; and, as the men think it no way diſhonourable to tell a trifling little fib to a woman, I ſhall ſoon have him vowing everlaſting fidelity and ſwearing,

"The envious moon grows pale and ſick with grief,
"That I, her maid, am far more fair than ſhe."

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

I conceive the whole deſign, Madam.

Miſs MONTAGU.

Well then, when he is in the meridian of all his nonſenſe—do you ſteal ſoftly out of the cloſet and ſit in that chair—I'll take care that he doesn't ſee you—If he forſwears his paſſion for you, give him a gentle pull by the ſleeve—and, looking him ſtedfaſtly in the face, leave all the reſt to accident.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

I am afraid I ſhan't have ſpirits to go through with it.

Miſs MONTAGU.

Courage, child; havn't I given you ſpirits enough in declaring that I'll never marry him?—I think you ſaid my woman let you in, and that you ſaw nobody elſe.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

Yes.

Miſs MONTAGU.

Why then ſhe ſhall keep your being here a ſecret from every body, and I warrant we'll pay the Captain off pretty handſomely—but why ſo melancholy?

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

Why, my dear Miſs Montagu, I don't know, if in juſtice to you, I ſhou'd think any more of Dormer — he has ſo many accompliſhments —

Miſs MONTAGU.

Well, my dear, to make you entirely eaſy, there is a man in the world who is, in my opinion, much more accompliſh'd; — but not a word to any body on this matter for your life — I only mention it to you in confidence, and to ſhew the probability of your yet being happy with Dormer.

*Enter* JENNY.

JENNY.

Madam, the pens and paper are laid in the next room.

Miſs MONTAGU.

Very well — go — and Jenny —

JENNY.

Madam.

Miſs MONTAGU.

Don't give the leaſt hint to any of the family that Miſs Willoughby is here.

JENNY.

By no means, Madam. [*Exit.*

Miſs MONTAGU.

And now we'll prepare a letter to your father — But come, my dear girl, you muſt not be ſo dejected — Your little error is amply attoned for by the generoſity of this conduct; and there are ſome faults which, like happy ſhades in a fine picture, actually give a forcible effect to the amiable light of our characters. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE

SCENE *changes to the* Pall-mall *apartments.*

*Enter* WILLOUGHBY, *Mrs.* WILLOUGHBY, DORMER, *and* LUCY.

DORMER.

Come in, my dear Sir — come in — don't be alarm'd Miſs Willoughby — your father is prepared to overlook every — Why, ſhe isn't here!

LUCY.

Pray, Sir, didn't I tell you ſo?

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

What isn't ſhe here?

LUCY.

No, Madam.

WILLOUGHBY.

No!

LUCY.

Lord bleſs you, Sir, didn't I tell you ſo as you came up?

DORMER.

And where is ſhe gone to?

LUCY.

Do you deſire I ſhou'd tell the truth?

WILLOUGHBY.

Ay, ſpeak the truth child, and fear nothing — But let's take a peep into this room.

[*Goes into another room.*

LUCY.

Then the truth is——

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

That's a good girl, ſpeak up.

LUCY.

The truth is, I don't know where ſhe's gone.

DORMER.

Death and confuſion, — where can ſhe be gone to?

LUCY.

That I don't know, as I ſaid before — But ſhe went with your friend — the gentleman you ſent here on a meſſage to her. [*Exit.*

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

O, ſhe's gone away with a friend of your's, is ſhe — for ſhame Captain Dormer — you a tender lover — you animated with that exquiſite ſoftneſs which ſouls of ſenſibility feel.

DORMER.

Death, Madam, why will you teaze me in this manner — I tell you I have been betray'd. —— .

*Re-enter* WILLOUGHBY.

WILLOUGHBY.

No, Sir, it is I who am betray'd. — And ſo a friend of his has carried her off.

[*To Mrs. Willoughby.*

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

Yes, and every thing happens for the beſt now — does not it?

DORMER.

Mr. Willoughby, hear me.

WILLOUGHBY.

Captain Dormer, after this re-iterated inſult, this aggravated cruelty — 'tis infamous to talk with you. — However, Sir, old as you think me, and little as you dread my reſentment, you ſhall feel it heavily. — No! injur'd as I am, you ſhall never receive a ſtroke from me. — I am too miſerable myſelf by the loſs of a child, to ſtab my beſt benefactor even in the perſon of a worthleſs ſon. — You are therefore

ſafe

afe. — Safe as the fears of cowardice can wiſh. — But, if you have feelings, to thoſe feelings I conſign you. — They will wake a ſcorpion in that boſom to avenge my wrongs. — For know, though bad men may find it poſſible to elude the juſtice of a whole univerſe, they are yet utterly without means of flying from their own recollection.

DORMER.

Mr. Willoughby, let me only explain the matter——

WILLOUGHBY.

Sir, I'll talk to no monſters.

DORMER.

Dear Mrs. Willoughby, your huſband is ſo impetuous —

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

Don't ſpeak to me, Sir — don't ſpeak to me. — A perfidious lover ſhall never gain an audience from Mr. Willoughby. — But, my dear, — what do you intend doing?

WILLOUGHBY.

Pray, Madam, don't teaze me.

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

Why, you ill-natur'd — but I won't forget the bounds of propriety — eſpecially as you are not madman enough to fight — It wou'd be little for the better if you were killed.

WILLOUGHBY.

Death, Madam, any thing wou'd be for the better, that ſet me free from your intollerable impertinence. [*Exit.*

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

Did the world ever hear ſuch a vulgar fellow — But theſe huſbands have no more breeding! — And here he has gone without giving me his hand. — In a little time I ſuppoſe the fair ſex will

be entirely neglected. — [*Going, returns.*] But, Sir, a word in your ear. — You are a baſe man. — I would not violate propriety for the world — but you are a baſe man. Sir John ſhall know every thing inſtantly. — 'Twas I that urg'd my poor girl to repoſe that implicit confidence in your honour — and ſince my advice has loſt — my aſſiduity will do any thing to recover her. [*Exit.*

DORMER.

Why, how juſt is it that profligacy ſhou'd be conſtantly attended with puniſhment, and how reaſonable is it, that thoſe who make no ſcruple of wounding the happineſs of others, ſhou'd be conſpicuouſly miſerable themſelves. — How ſhall I look my father in the face, when this matter comes to be known; or how ſhall I ſee this unhappy old man, whom I have ſo infamouſly wrong'd. — What a poor, what a paltry, what a mercileſs paſſion, is this paſſion of gallantry; yet it reflects no ſcandal whatever upon it's followers, though it begins in the moſt deſpicable falſhood, and terminates in the moſt irreparable deſtruction. — A man of gallantry, is the only wretch who can deſpiſe the ſenſe of ſhame, and ſtifle the feelings of gratitude without reproach; take him into your houſe, he attempts the ſanctity of your bed; — load him with obligations, and he betrays the purity of your daughter. — The ſenſible world however allows him to be a man of honour all the time, and he ſtabs you with impunity to the heart for preſuming to complain of your wrongs. — Why did not I ſee the blackneſs of this character a little earlier. — But — no — My curſed pride would reſiſt the arguments of my conviction. — And for a pitiful triumph over an unſuſpecting innocent, I muſt baſely diveſt myſelf both of reaſon and humanity. Where can this girl be fled to? — Villars I am ſure is incapable of betraying me, and as ſhe came here with her own conſent

ſent ſhe was prepared for the conſequences of courſe.

*Enter* VILLARS.

My dear Villars you are come moſt luckily, here Miſs Willoughby is gone off, and the people of the houſe have the impudence to ſay, by your means.

VILLARS.

Well, and they ſay very juſtly.

DORMER.

How's this?

VILLARS.

I ſuffer'd her to eſcape — I aſſiſted in her eſcape — and am now ready to anſwer for the conſequences.

DORMER.

Indeed!

VILLARS.

But firſt, Sir, let me return you the commiſſion, and the note with which you were this morning ſo kind as to preſent me. — I do not mean to keep your favours while I counteract your views, and I ſcorn to profit by the generoſity of any man, unleſs upon terms that merit my approbation.

DORMER.

Death and the devil, Sir, how dare you uſe me in this manner: how dare you betray my confidence ſo ſcandalouſly, draw, and give me inſtant ſatisfaction.

VILLARS.

I came here on purpoſe to give you ſatisfaction — but before I draw ſuffer me to aſk a queſtion or two in my turn. — And now, Sir, how dare you ſuppoſe, that I was to be made the inſtrument of your licentiouſneſs; how dare you ſuppoſe that I

wou'd be the pander to your vices, and join with you in a barbarous contrivance of deſtroying a young creature, whoſe inexperience was her only crime?

DORMER.

Here's a fellow!

VILLARS.

But I ſuppoſe you inſulted me on account of my ſituation, and imagin'd, becauſe I was poor that I was conſequently worthleſs; however, Sir, be now undeceiv'd, and, in the midſt of your affluence, and my poverty, know, that I am your ſuperior, for the beſt of all reaſons, becauſe I diſdain to commit a deſpicable action.

DORMER.

I am aſtoniſh'd at the very impudence of his rectitude, and can't ſay a ſyllable to him.

VILLARS.

When I came here, inſtead of a willing victim to your wiſhes, I found Miſs Willougby in the utmoſt affliction, conſcious of her indiſcretion in flying from her father, and ſhuddering with apprehenſion of violence from you. — She ſoon inform'd me of her fears, and lamented, in the moſt pathetic terms, how greatly ſhe had been deceiv'd in the object of her affection. — She imagin'd an honourable union with you, wou'd have been the conſequence of her flight; and little ſuppoſed that the man ſhe lov'd wou'd make uſe of her partiality for himſelf to cover her with diſgrace. — Thus diſappointed, thus betray'd, ſhe aſk'd for my protection, ſhe receiv'd it — and now, Sir, *(drawing)* take your revenge.

DORMER.

Yes, Sir, I will take my revenge, but it ſhall be thus: *(throwing down his ſword and ſhaking*

*Villars by the hand)* Thus, my dear Villars, let me thank you for the ſuperiority of your principles; I am myſelf juſt awakened to a ſenſe of true honour, and cannot, now I know the real motive of your conduct, reſent, as an injury, what I muſt look upon with the higheſt admiration.

VILLARS.

How agreeably you ſurprize me, Sir.

DORMER.

Dear Villars, take theſe trifles again, or I ſhall not think you forgive me. *(Villars accepts the commiſſion, &c.)* But, my poor girl — and ſo ſhe has principle after all — what a raſcal have I been! — Do tell me where ſhe's gone.

VILLARS.

Indeed I cannot. — I only ſaw her into a coach; but I ſuppoſe ſhe is returned to her father's.

DORMER.

No — ſhe is not — her father is but juſt gone — he came to me, as I ſuſpected, on the very firſt knowledge of her flight; and ſhew'd ſo deep a diſtreſs, that I cou'dn't perſevere in my deſign of ſeeming wholly ignorant of her elopement.

VILLARS.

Well!

DORMER.

I therefore brought him here to give her back; and the poor man was actually in extaſies — but when he found ſhe was gone, he loſt all patince; and, naturally enough, imagining that ſhe was carry'd off by my contrivance, treated me with a freedom, which nothing but the conviction of my guilt could enable me to endure, even from the father of Miſs Willoughby.

VILLARS.

Upon my word, this affair has drawn you into a very diſagreeable ſituation. DORMER.

DORMER.

Into a disagreeable situation! — into a damn'd one — and I shall hate the word Gallantry as long as I live. — My friend's daughter too! — shame — shame — shame — Zounds! Villars, a man ought to be good even from policy, if he is not so from inclination. — Damn it; you don't know half the perplexities of my situation.

VILLARS.

No!

DORMER.

No. — Distracted as I am, I must assume a calm unruffled face immediately, before Miss Montagu.

VILLARS.

What, are you going to Miss Montagu directly?

DORMER.

Yes, instantly — I have myself requested a tete a tete, to make a formal declaration — and truly I am in a pretty frame of mind to make love to a woman of her vivacity.

VILLARS.

Why, indeed, your hands are pretty full of business.

DORMER.

Yes, yes, I have business enough; and my father will know every thing presently. — But I must be a man of gallantry, and be damn'd to me! — Villars, you now see, that the greatest of all idiots is he who makes himself despicable to destroy his own happiness. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE *changes to a Room at the* Cocoa-tree.

Sir GEORGE *(alone.)*

Well, here I am; and a pleasant affair I have to go through! — I wish it was well over: — For

For, though there may be a great deal of bravery in venturing one's life, I can't ſay that there is a great deal of ſatisfaction.

*Enter a* WAITER.

WAITER.

Sir John Dormer, Sir.

Sir GEORGE.

Shew Sir John up. — Now for it.

*The* WAITER *returns, introducing* Sir JOHN, *and exits.*

Sir GEORGE.

Sir John, your moſt obedient.

Sir JOHN.

Well, Sir George; I ſee you are a man of courage at leaſt; and ſo far I find you worth my reſentment.

Sir GEORGE.

No reproaches now, my dear Sir John: For the greateſt enemies make a point of being perfectly well bred, when they are going to cut one another's throats.

Sir JOHN.

Then, Sir George, that I may anſwer your ideas of politeneſs, let me beg of you to draw inſtantly.

Sir GEORGE.

There is no refuſing a requeſt which is made with ſo much civility; and now, Sir, I am all obedience to your commands.

Sir JOHN.

And now to puniſh the infamous inſult which has been offer'd to my family.

*Miſs* DORMER *ruſhes from a door at the head of the ſtage; and, falling upon her knees, exclaims,*

Then puniſh it here, Sir: For I alone am culpable. Sir

Sir JOHN.

How's this!

Miſs DORMER.

O Sir, hear me with pity: For the dread of your reſentment is inſupportable.

Sir GEORGE.

A lady upon her knees! Pray, Madam, ſuffer me raiſe you up.

Miſs DORMER.

No, Sir George: This attitude beſt becomes a creature like me, who has not only expos'd her benefactor to danger, but even rais'd a ſword againſt the life of her father.

Sir JOHN.

Riſe, Caroline. — But tell me, in the name of wonder, what am I to underſtand by this?

Miſs DORMER.

My indiſcretion, Sir — my diſobedience: — For, though you have ever treated me with the moſt unbounded indulgence, I have nevertheleſs ungratefully diſappointed your views, and plac'd my affection upon an object that can never be intitled to your approbation.

Sir GEORGE.

So my throat ſeems to be pretty ſafe this time.

Sir JOHN.

Go on.

Miſs DORMER.

Actuated by my regard for this object, though utterly deſpairing to obtain him, I truſted Sir George with the ſecret, in the fulneſs of my heart; and begg'd he would not only withdraw his addreſſes, but withdraw them in ſuch a manner, as might ſave me even from the ſuſpicion of any unwillingneſs to pay an implicit obedience to your commands. Sir

Sir JOHN.

This is very extraordinary.

Sir GEORGE.

Yes, but it's very true for all that.

Miſs DORMER.

Sir George ſaw my diſtreſs, and kindly complied with my requeſt; and hadn't I accidentally overheard the altercation which produc'd this meeting, the beſt of fathers or the nobleſt of men (*pointing to Sir* George) had perhaps fallen a ſacrifice to the unhappy prepoſſeſſion of an inconſiderate daughter.

Sir GEORGE.

I never knew ſo ſenſible a woman in my life.

Miſs DORMER.

Diſtracted at the extremity to which matters were carried, I knew not how to act—The moment I was capable of reſolving, I reſolv'd to fly here and wait for your arrival—not coming to any determination till you, Sir, and Sir George had quitted the houſe—here I hinted to the people my apprehenſion of a miſunderſtanding between you, and deſir'd to be plac'd in the next room to that which he told me was reſerv'd for your uſe—the reſt is already known—and I am now to intreat Sir George's forgiveneſs, for the danger to which his unexampled greatneſs of mind had ſo nearly expos'd him—and to implore your pardon, Sir, for daring to entertain even a hopeleſs prepoſſeſſion, when I knew it muſt combat with the favourite object of your inclinations.

Sir GEORGE.

Come, Sir John—what the devil are you dreaming of—you and I are friends now—and therefore we need not ſtand altogether upon ceremonies.

Sir JOHN.

I am conſidering, Sir George, whether I ought moſt to be pleas'd, or offended with my daughter.

Sir GEORGE.

Zounds, man, be pleas'd with her, for it will be moſt to your own ſatisfaction.

Sir JOHN.

Then, Caroline, let me tell you that I am charm'd with your frankneſs upon this occaſion—though I am ſorry it was not ſhewn a little earlier—had you ingenuouſly told me the ſituation of your heart when I talk'd to you this morning, you wou'd have ſav'd yourſelf much anxiety, and prevented me from behaving in a manner to Sir George that I muſt be eternally aſham'd of.

Miſs DORMER.

Indeed, Sir, if you knew my motive—

Sir GEORGE.

Come, come, my dear Miſs Dormer—don't let us pain ourſelves with the recollection of paſt anxieties—when we may indulge ourſelves with the proſpect of future happineſs—I have no notion of the wiſdom that makes us miſerable—and therefore, Sir John muſt and ſhall, if he expects me to overlook his cavalier conduct of to-day, do me the favour to conſult your inclinations.

Miſs DORMER.

You are too good, Sir George—but—

Sir JOHN.

Speak up my dear, and tell us candidly who you have diſtinguiſh'd with your approbation—I am not one of the fathers who wiſh to maintain a deſpotic authority, nor will I make my daughter wretched, to convince the world that I am maſter in my family.

Sir GEORGE.

O fye, Sir John, there are a great many good fathers who never refuse any thing but happiness to their children.

Miss DORMER.

I am so overwhelm'd with this goodness—it is at present too much for me. As we go home in the coach I shall endeavour to let you know every thing—Especially as the object of my choice is—

Sir JOHN.

Is he a man of merit, my dear—is he a good man—he that is worthy in himself, is above the despicable necessity of stealing a reputation from the virtue of his progenitors; the riches of the heart are the noblest of all possessions.

[*Exeunt* Sir John, *and* Miss Dormer.

Sir GEORGE.

I am entirely of Sir John's opinion—the riches of the heart are the noblest of all possessions, and I don't think that, on the present occasion, I have proved myself the poorest fellow in the kingdom—notwithstanding my recent insignificance.

[*Exit.*

*End of the Fourth* ACT.

# ACT V.

## SCENE *Sir* JOHN DORMER'S *Houſe.*

*Enter Miſs* MONTAGU, *and Miſs* WILLOUGHBY.

Miſs MONTAGU.

Why, what can keep this hopeful Corydon of ours.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

Poſſibly ſome other attachment.

Miſs MONTAGU.

Jealouſy, Miſs Willoughby—rank jealouſy, my dear girl—O that we ſhou'd be ſuch fools as to beſtow a ſingle thought upon theſe wretched fellows, who are not ſenſible of the obligation.

*Enter* JENNY.

Madam, Madam, Captain Dormer is coming up. [*Exit.*

Miſs MONTAGU.

To your ambuſh, my dear—and be ſure you watch a proper opportunity of annoying the enemy.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY (*retiring into a cloſet.*)

O you ſhan't have any occaſion to queſtion my generalſhip.

*Enter* DORMER.

DORMER.

Miſs Montagu, your moſt obedient

Miſs MONTAGU.

Captain Dormer, your moſt devoted humble ſervant.

DORMER.

I am come my dear Miſs Montagu.—

Miſs

Miſs MONTAGU.

I ſee you are, my dear Captain Dormer.

DORMER.

The amiable vivacity of your temper, Madam, has always been an object of my admiration—but I come now to ſolicit you in regard to a ſubject—

Miſs MONTAGU.

Upon which it is criminal I ſuppoſe to exerciſe my amiable vivacity.

DORMER.

I need not inform you, Madam, of the engagement which, ſo happily for me, ſubſiſts between our families—nor need I remind you—

Miſs MONTAGU.

Why then do you give yourſelf this trouble, Sir, if the information is ſo very unneceſſary?

DORMER.

That I may tell you, Madam, I am inexpreſſibly fortunate in the honour of this interview, and that I may aſſure the moſt charming of her ſex the whole felicity of my life materially depends upon her approbation.

Miſs MONTAGU.

Upon my word, a very pretty ſpeech, Captain, and very tolerably expreſs'd—but do you know now, that I look upon the whole buſineſs of making love to be mighty fooliſh, and have no notion of a woman's ſenſe, who is to be flatter'd out of her liberty, by a flimſy compliment to her perſon.

DORMER.

This livelineſs is charming—but you muſt not however rally me out of my purpoſe—ſuffer me therefore, my dear Miſs Montagu, to implore—

Miſs

Miſs MONTAGU.

Now poſitively I muſt ſtop you, for there is no bearing the inſolence of this humility.

DORMER.

What inſolence—my dear Miſs Montague—Is it inſolence thus to fall at your feet—Is it inſolence—

Miſs MONTAGU.

For heaven's ſake Dormer don't make a fool of yourſelf—for I tell you the humbleſt ſupplications with which you men can poſſibly teaze the women, are an unaccountable mixture of pride and abſurdity.

DORMER.

There is ſomething ſo very new in this opinion, Madam, that I ſhould be glad you'd let me know how it is to be ſupported.

Miſs MONTAGU.

O 'tis very eaſily ſupported, if you only ſuffer me to put the general purport of all love addreſſes, from the time of the firſt pair, down to the preſent hour, into ſomething like plain Engliſh.

DORMER.

Pray do.

Miſs MONTAGU.

Why then ſuppoſe, that a tender lover, like you, ſhou'd offer up his adoration at the altar of ſome terreſtrial divinity like myſelf, let me aſk you if this wou'd not be the meaning of his pretty harangue, however he might ſtudy to diſguiſe his deſign with the plauſible language of adulation.

DORMER.

Now for it.

Miſs MONTAGU.

Don't interrupt me—Madam, your beauty is ſo exquiſite, and your merit is ſo tranſcendent, that Emperors themſelves might juſtly tremble to approach

proach you, and languiſh in the deepeſt deſpair of being allied to ſo much perfection.

DORMER.

Well ſaid.

Miſs MONTAGU.

Yet, though all hearts are yours, and though you were born to triumph over an admiring world, I deſire you will inſtantly appoint me the maſter of your fate—my happineſs depends upon your being a ſlave, and I muſt be eternally wretched, without the power of making you miſerable—you muſt therefore promiſe to know no will but my humour, and no pleaſure but my inclination—Your preſent ſtate of freedom you muſt exchange for the moſt mortifying dependence, and throw your whole fortune at my feet, for the honour of managing the domeſtic concerns of my family. If you—

DORMER.

What the devil is there more of it?

Miſs MONTAGU.

If you behave well, that is if you put up with every caprice of my temper, and every irregularity of my conduct; if you meanly kiſs the hand that ſtrikes at your repoſe, and treat me with reverence when I offer you the groſſeſt indignities, you ſhall have an occaſional new gown, and ſometimes the uſe of your own chariot—Nay, if you are very good indeed, I may carry my kindneſs ſtill farther, and uſe you with nearly as much civility as any of my ſervants.

DORMER.

What hav'nt you done yet?

Miſs MONTAGU.

O I cou'd go on for an hour—But what do you think of this ſpecimen—Isn't it a true tranſlation of all the love ſpeeches that have been made ſince the

the commencement of the world, and aren't you men a ſet of very modeſt creatures, to ſuppoſe that an addreſs of this elegant nature is calculated to make an inſtant conqueſt of our affections?

DORMER.

This ſpirit is bewitching, and increaſes my admiration, though it treats me with ſeverity.

Miſs MONTAGU.

Well, notwithſtanding the frightful idea which I entertain of matrimony, I am nevertheleſs half afraid I ſhall be at laſt cheated out of my freedom as well as the reſt of my ſex — but then I muſt be perfectly convinc'd of my admirer's ſincerity.

DORMER.

A decent hint that, though I wiſh it had been ſpar'd.— [*Aſide.*] And can you, my dear Miſs Montagu, poſſibly doubt the ſincerity of my profeſſions, and cruelly turn away thoſe irreſiſtible eyes when I vow an everlaſting fidelity? — What, ſtill ſilent, my angel — not a word — not one word to reſcue me from deſtraction — but be it ſo — If Miſs Montagu decrees my fate, I ſubmit without murmuring, for death itſelf is infinitely preferrable to the idea of offending her. [*Going.*] I think I am pretty ſafe now. [*Aſide.*]

Miſs MONTAGU

Now, who wou'd believe that this fellow cou'd lye with ſo very grave a countenance. [*Aſide.*] Why you are in a violent hurry Captain Dormer.

DORMER.

O, zounds, ſhe calls me back does ſhe? [*Aſide.*] What, my dear Miſs Montagu, do you relent, do you feel the leaſt compaſſion for the diſtreſſes of a heart that adores you?

Miſs MONTAGU.

Sit down, Captain.— Sit down here — I am a ſtrange, fooliſh creature — and cannot diſguiſe my

my ſentiments. — But if I thought myſelf the only object. —

DORMER.

By all my hopes —

Miſs MONTAGU.

Well, don't ſwear — I muſt believe you. — And yet I am ſtrangely apprehenſive that in the extenſive circle of your acquaintance you muſt have form'd ſome attachments. — The world has been talking — and 'tis no ſecret that Miſs Willoughby has accompliſhments.

*Miſs* WILLOUGHBY *enters unobſerved by* DORMER, *and ſits down.*

DORMER.

Yes, Madam — Miſs Willoughby has accompliſhments, but they are very trifling.

Miſs MONTAGU.

Then you never entertained any tenderneſs for her, I ſuppoſe.

DORMER.

For Miſs Willoughby, Madam — O my dear Miſs Montagu, you don't think me altogether deſtitute of underſtanding!

Miſs MONTAGU.

Why, you juſt now own'd that ſhe had accompliſhments.

DORMER.

Yes, I ſaid that ſhe had trifling ones.

Miſs MONTAGU.

And no more?

DORMER.

The baby's face is regular enough — and might ſerve very well for the window of a toy-ſhop.

Miſs MONTAGU.

Then I find there is nothing to be apprehended on her account.

DORMER.

On her account, my angel, you ſhan't leſſen the merit of your own attractions ſo much as to admit the poſſibility of ſuppoſing it.

Miſs WILLOUGHBY, *(Giving him a pull by the ſleeve.)*

I am very much oblig'd to you, Sir.

Miſs MONTAGU. *(Ludicrouſly.)*

Not a word, not one word to reſcue me from diſtraction ——

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

The baby's face is regular enough, and might ſerve very well for the window of a toy-ſhop —

Miſs MONTAGU.

But be it ſo — If Miſs Montagu decrees my fate, I ſubmit without murmuring. —

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

O don't think the Gentleman altogether deſtitute of underſtanding ——

Miſs MONTAGU.

For death itſelf is infinitely more preferrable to the idea of offending her —— There Miſs Willoughby is a man of honour for you —

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

And are theſe the men who value themſelves ſo much upon their veracity?

Miſs MONTAGUE.

O my dear, they have veracity to a very prudent degree, for they never tell a falſhood to any body who is capable of calling them to an account — But come, Miſs Willoughby, let us leave

leave the Gentleman to himſelf — he has a very pretty ſubject for a reverie, and it wou'd be cruel to diſturb him in his agreeable reflections — Sir, your moſt obedient —— Give it him home, my dear girl — have no mercy on him — [*Aſide to Miſs* WILLOUGHBY.]

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

Sir, your moſt reſpectful —

Miſs MONTAGU.

That's right — Sir, your moſt oblig'd —

Miſs WILLOUGHBY.

Your moſt faithful —

Miſs MONTAGU.

Bravo! — And moſt devoted humble ſervant.

[*Exeunt laughing.*

DORMER. [*After a long pauſe of confuſion.*] So; I have had a hopeful time on't — my evil genius has been along arrear in my debt, and now pays me off with a witneſs. — What a ſneaking, what a pitiful puppy do I appear — thus detected, and thus laughed at — But I deſerve it all — I woudn't ſee the infamy of practiſing deceit upon a woman — I muſt even think myſelf call'd upon to betray, becauſe the object was a woman; and laugh at the anguiſh I gave a worthy heart, becauſe it was lodg'd in a female breaſt —— Notwithſtanding all my mortification, however, I am overjoyed at finding Miſs Willoughby ſafe — I may now perhaps prevent the matter from reaching my father's ears — not that I fear he will diſcard — but what is infinitely worſe, if he knows it, will eternally deſpiſe me —— How merry the girls were with me — Sir, your moſt reſpectful — Sir, your moſt oblig'd — Sir, your moſt faithful —

*Enter Sir* JOHN.

Sir JOHN.

Sir, your moſt devoted humble ſervant —

DORMER. [*Aſide.*]

O! now I am completely done for —

Sir JOHN.

Well, Sir, what can be urg'd for you now? — Is this the reformation I was to expect — and is this the regard which you entertain for the credit of your family?

DORMER.

If you'll give me leave to clear this matter up, Sir —

Sir JOHN.

'Tis already clear'd up — Mr. Willoughby — Miſs Montagu have clear'd it up — And now ſuppoſe Mr. Willoughby, liſtening only to the dictates of his rage, and not to the pleadings of his friendſhip for me, had demanded reparation for his wrongs, how, after robbing him of his daughter, cou'd you come prepar'd againſt his life — And how, after deſtroying a young lady's reputation, cou'd you attempt to embrue your hands in the blood of her father? —— But, Sir, you are a man of ſpirit, you are a man of honour, and that ſpirit, and that honour are to be ſufficient pleas for every violence offer'd to juſtice, and ev'ry outrage commited upon humanity — You have a title to be guilty, becauſe you have the character of being brave, and you may perpetrate the blackeſt crime with impunity, becauſe you have the diabolical reſolution to defend it.

DORMER.

There is ſo much propriety in this reproach, Sir — that I feel myſelf unable to anſwer it —

Sir JOHN.

That ſword I gave you, Sir, to be exerted in the cauſe of honour, not to be drawn in the ſupport of infamy — I gave it to be us'd in the defence of your country, not to be exercis'd in the violation of her laws — but why do I talk of honour to him who looks with admiration upon ſhame, and thinks himſelf accompliſh'd in proportion as he becomes profligate — why do I reaſon with a man who glories in the proſtitution of his underſtanding, and imagines he exalts his character as he deſtroys the peace of ſociety? — Perhaps, in his ideas of bravery he may be oblig'd even to raiſe his arm againſt my boſom, and perhaps he may puniſh a reproachful mention of his vices, though it comes from the lips of his father.

DORMER.

Sir, I have been culpable — extremely culpable — but my preſent intention is to remove Mr. Willoughby's diſtreſs — not to defend the injury I offered him — and I can with truth affirm, that the principal part of my miſconduct in this affair, originally proceeded from the great veneration which I entertained for that very father, who now thinks me ſo profligate and unnatural.

Sir JOHN.

Mighty well!

DORMER.

I lov'd Miſs Willoughby, Sir, tenderly lov'd her, before you enter'd into any engagement about Miſs Montagu — But fearful of diſobliging you, I kept the circumſtance of my paſſion a ſecret, as I did not ſuppoſe you wou'd countenance a union, where there was ſo material a diſparity of ſituations.

Sir

Sir JOHN.

And, pray, Sir, how dare you ſuppoſe that I ſhou'd be more offended at the performance of a good action — than at the commiſſion of a diſhonourable one? — How dare you imagine I ſhou'd be diſpleas'd at your marriage with Miſs Willoughby, and that I ſhou'd not be infinitely more diſpleas'd at this ſcandalous ſeduction? — But it was your regard for me which led you to betray the confidence of your friend, as well as to attempt the innocence of his daughter — Yes, Sir, your regard for me is extremely evident — You knew how much my happineſs depended upon your reputable riſe in the world, and how warmly I expected you wou'd be a credit to your country, as well as an ornament to your family — Your natural advantages were great, and your education has been liberal — Yet, inſtead of the flattering proſpects with which my imagination was once delighted, I have now nothing before me but a gloomy ſcene of diſappointment and regret — Inſtead of hearing my ſon's name with joy, and exulting in the growing dignity of his character, I am hourly mortified with ſome freſh accounts of his licentiouſneſs, and hourly trembling, leſt the hand of well-grounded reſentment, or the ſword of public juſtice, ſhould cut him off in the perpetration of his crimes — Inſtead of finding him the ſupport of my age, he inceſſantly ſaps the foundation of my life, and inſtead of kindly nouriſhing the lamp of my exiſtence with his virtues, he ſinks me down into the grave, an equal victim of ſorrow and diſgrace.

DORMER. [*Falling at his father's feet.*]

No more, Sir, I beſeech you no more — nor ſuppoſe me ſuch a monſter — My life hitherto has

been a ſcene of folly and diſſipation, and I reflect, with the deepeſt concern, upon the anxiety which the beſt of fathers has ſuffer'd on my account — but if he can be prevail'd upon to forgive the paſt, the future, I will boldly ſay, ſhall merit his approbation — for I am now ſatisfied that nothing can be conſiſtent with the principles of honour, which is any way repugnant to the laws of morality.

Sir JOHN.

Riſe, and be my ſon again — there is a candour, there is a generoſity in this acknowledgment which engages my confidence, and I ſtill flatter myſelf with a belief, that you will anſwer my warmeſt expectations.

DORMER.

You are too good, Sir —— But the freedom with which I ſhall communicate the moſt unfavourable circumſtances of this affair, as well as my readineſs to fulfill all your commands, ſhall in ſome meaſure prove the certainty of my reformation.

Sir JOHN.

Why, Jack, this is ſpeaking like my ſon — And to let you ſee that your inclination is the only object of my wiſhes, Miſs Willoughby's hand now waits to crown your return to virtue.

DORMER.

Miſs Willoughby's, Sir!

Sir JOHN.

Yes, — Miſs Montagu, juſt as I entered, acquainted me with the whimſical diſtreſs of your courtſhip ſcene, in terms equally conſiſtent with her uſual good-nature and vivacity, and on account, of your attachment to Miſs Willoughby, as well as

as her own fix'd diſinclination to be your's, requeſted I wou'd not think any longer of the treaty between our families — Finding her determin'd in the ſolicitation, I wou'd by no means force her wiſhes — and am now rejoic'd at ſo lucky an opportunity of rewarding, as you yourſelf cou'd deſire, the merit of your preſent character.

DORMER.

There is no doing juſtice to the generoſity of your ſentiments, Sir —

Sir JOHN.

Poh, poh, man, the parent that makes his children happieſt always gives them the beſt fortunes —— We'll, now join the company chearfully — But remember for the future, my dear boy, what every ſon ſhou'd conſtantly have in view, that more than your own happineſs and your own honour are truſted to your care, and that you cannot experience a misfortune, nor ſuffer a diſgrace, without ſenſibly wounding the boſom of your father. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE *another Room at Sir* JOHN DORMER'S.

*Enter* Sir GEORGE.

So then, it ſeems, I am not quite deteſtible after all. — It ſeems there are ſome women, though I have been rejected, who can ſtill think me amiable — and declare, if ever they change their ſituation, I muſt poſitively be the man. — Villars had the ſecret from Miſs Dormer — and Miſs Dormer had the acknowledgement of Miſs Montagu's regard for me, from Miſs Montague herſelf — her refuſal of Dormer moreover

over corroborates the intelligence, even if there was any thing very improbable in my having engag'd a lady's affection. — Upon my ſoul I don't ſee but Harriot is to the full as handſome as Caroline; and then her underſtanding — Yes, I think 'tis pretty evident that ſhe has the advantage in underſtanding — Ay, but can I ſo readily forget Caroline — Can I ſo quickly remove my addreſſes, and offer up that heart at the ſhrine of the one which has been ſo recently rejected at the altar of the other — Why, to be ſure, there will be nothing extremely gallant in ſuch an affair — But, at the ſame time, there will be nothing extremely prepoſterous — It doesn't follow, becauſe I have been repuls'd by one woman, that I ſhould forſwear the whole ſex; and, in a fit of amorous lunacy, like the knight errants of old, nobly dedicate my life to deſpair, becauſe I unfortunately loſt the original object of my affections — Beſides, at the preſent period, changing hands is all the faſhion; and while it is ſo meritorious in men of quality to part with their wives, it cannot ſurely be very criminal to part with our miſtreſſes — here, by all that's opportune, ſhe comes — what a bewitching girl — O! 'twou'd be barbarous to let her pine — I'll give her encouragement at once, and put an end to her anxiety.

*Enter* Miſs MONTAGU.

Miſs MONTAGU.

O! there's no bearing their loves, and their joys — their tears, and their congratulations — Sir John has join'd the hands of another couple — and Caroline has now Miſs Willoughby to keep her in countenance — But pray, Sir George, wasn't

poor Villars overjoy'd when you told him of Sir John's deſign of receiving him as a ſon-in-law.

Sir GEORGE.

He was, both with gratitude and aſtoniſhment — however, I carried him immediately to Sir John; here Miſs Dormer was ſent for, and, without the leaſt hint of her private ſentiments, Sir John, who had properly ſounded the young fellow's inclinations, introduc'd him as a man whom he found worthy to be his ſon-in-law, and her huſband.

Miſs MONTAGU.

I pity'd her ſituation moſt heartily.

Sir GEORGE.

I pity the ſituation of every lady in love, Madam

Miſs MONTAGU.

I am ſure Miſs Dormer thinks herſelf much indebted to your generoſity.

Sir GEORGE.

Perhaps, Madam, I may yet have obligations to the prepoſſeſſion of Miſs Dormer.

Miſs MONTAGU.

Prepoſſeſſions are ſtrong things, Sir George.

Sir GEORGE.

And, in a lady's boſom, Madam, very troubleſome.

Miſs MONTAGU.

Not where the object is attainable ——

Sir GEORGE.

True, Madam — and he muſt be a barbarian who, conſcious of a lady's tenderneſs, poſſeſſes the ability without the inclination to return it — I think that hint will give her ſome conſolation. [*Aſide.*]

Miſs

Miſs MONTAGU.

The men, I believe, Sir George, have but few opportunities of exerciſing ſuch a barbarity — Indications of tenderneſs ſeldom firſt proceed from the ladies.

Sir GEORGE.

I don't know that, Madam — but was I happy enough to be the object of a lady's eſteem — I would ſacrafice much to remove her anxiety — This will make her ſpeak or the devil's in't. [*Aſide.*]

Miſs MONTAGU.

Kind creature! and ſo you'd condeſcend to take pity on her.

Sir GEORGE.

I would do every thing to make her happy, Madam — why, what the plague muſt ſhe be in love, and is the courtſhip to come entirely from my ſide? [*Aſide.*]

Miſs MONTAGU.

Well! you are a whimſical creature, and ſo I leave you —

Sir GEORGE.

Stay, Miſs Montagu —

Miſs MONTAGU.

For what?

Sir GEORGE.

I will be generous and ſpare her bluſhes [*Aſide.*] I have ſomething very ſerious to ſay to you.

Miſs MONTAGU.

Serious indeed if one may judge by your gravity.

Sir GEORGE.

Miſs Montagu, I am inexpreſſibly concerned — I ſay inexpreſſibly concern'd to ſee you of late ſo melancholy.

Miſs MONTAGU.

To ſee me of late ſo melancholy!—Why, Sir George, I never had better ſpirits.

Sir GEORGE.

No!

Miſs MONTAGU.

No — really —

Sir GEORGE.

I cou'd not imagine it.

Miſs MONTAGU.

And why ſo, pray?

Sir GEORGE.

Why ſo, Madam? Nay, I have no particular reaſon — but Miſs Montagu, I ſhould be ſorry to ſee you labour under the ſmalleſt uneaſineſs — I have the higheſt opinion of your merit, Madam — and —

Miſs MONTAGU.

Surely Caroline has not—[*Aſide.*] I ſhall be always proud of poſſeſſing a place in the good opinion of Sir George Haſtings.

Sir GEORGE.

You do poſſeſs the principal place in my good opinion, Madam — and ——

*The back ſcene thrown open diſcovers Sir* JOHN, *Captain and Miſs* DORMER, VILLARS, *Mr. Mrs. and Miſs* WILLOUGHBY.

Sir GEORGE.

Zounds, this interruption is abominable.

DORMER.

Ay, this is right; now the rooms are thrown together, we ſhall have ſpace enough for a country dance in the evening — Villars we now are brothers.

VILLARS,

VILLARS.

To my unſpeakable tranſport.

Sir JOHN, *to* Willoughby, *who ſeems in private converſation with him.*

Nay, no acknowledgment, my dear Mr. Willoughby — I am acting no more than an intereſted part, and conſulting my own wiſhes in the wiſhes of my children.

WILLOUGHBY, *to his wife.*

Doesn't every thing happen for the beſt now?— And isn't this excellent young man, to whom I probably owe my child, another proof, that if we are deſirous of happineſs we muſt labour to deſerve it.

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY. [*Aſide.*]

My Scotch ſcheme has help'd the buſineſs greatly for all that.

Sir JOHN.

We'll have a public wedding — the friends of all our families ſhall be invited — and Mr. Villars, let not any humility in the ſituation of your's, prevent you from calling the worthy to be witneſſes of the juſtice which fortune renders to your merit.

VILLARS.

Sir, your goodneſs is unbounded — but juſtice obliges me to tell you, that the man thus honour'd with your eſteem, is even more humble than you think him; that he has no family, no relations — and, out of this company, no friends.

WILLOUGHBY.

How's this?

Sir JOHN.

Pray wasn't Mr. Villars, the clergyman in my neighbourhood, your uncle?

VILLARS.

VILLARS.

He was the beſt of men; and more than a father to me in every thing but the actual relation.

WILLOUGHBY, [*Impatiently.*]

Stand out of the way —

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

My dear, I deſire you won't forget the rules of propriety.

WILLOUGHBY.

You ſaid, Sir, you were ignorant of your family.

VILLARS.

I did, Sir.

WILLOUGHBY.

Some unhappy father, like me, now bleeds for the loſs of a ſon — Pray go on —

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

My dear —

VILLARS.

At an early ſtage of infancy, ſome wandering miſcreants ſtole me from my friends, and carried me into a diſtant part of the country, where a woman, who call'd herſelf my mother, being committed to priſon for a theft, fell ill of a fever, that put a period to her life — with her dying breath ſhe related this circumſtance, and wou'd have told more, but the laſt agonies taking away her utterance, prevented the poſſibility of any farther declaration.

Sir JOHN.

How unfortunate!

Miſs DORMER.

How extremely unfortunate!

VILLARS.

It wou'd have been ſtill more unfortunate, hadn't the good Mr. Villars, who kept a little academy in the place, attended the poor wretch with medicines, and look'd with an eye of compaſſion on my helpleſs ſituation — Mr. Villars was the univerſal friend of mankind, the rich never mentioned him without reverence, and the poor never beheld him without joy — But his income was too narrow for the extent of his benevolence, and he was involved in continual diſtreſſes from the uncommon excellence of his heart.

Sir GEORGE.

Zounds, no perſon doubts his being a good man.

VILLARS.

Mr. Villars, without heſitating, ordered me to be taken care of, and as ſoon as I was capable of inſtruction, receiv'd me into his houſe, where I was educated in common with the reſt of his pupils — and at laſt grew ſufficiently qualified to be his aſſiſtant; but his neceſſities encreaſing with the exerciſe of his virtues, notwithſtanding my utmoſt aſſiduity, he was oblig'd to ſell his academy, and I had at laſt the mortification of cloſing his eyes in the very priſon, from which I was originally reſcu'd by the greatneſs of his humanity.

Miſs DORMER.

And was it juſt at this time that Sir John bought the ſeat in your neighbourhood?

VILLARS.

It was, Madam — and it was at this time alſo, that hearing Sir John had an occaſion for an aſſiſtant in ſome literary employments, I procur'd the recommendation to him which has given me the

the honour of being known in this family — The only trace of what I ever was, is this picture; which was by some means in my possession when I was stolen, as the woman who stole me declar'd in the course of her imperfect narration; fearing to dispose of it, she kept it to the hour of her death, and then delivered it up as a possible means of finding out my family —

Sir JOHN.

Let me see this picture.

WILLOUGHBY.

No, let me see it for the love of heaven — O Sir John — Sir John — this was Lady Dormer's picture — she made a present of it to my first wife, and here on the setting are the initials of her name.

Sir JOHN.

I remember it perfectly — I myself ordered the letters to be engrav'd.

VILLARS.

I can scarce speak.

WILLOUGHBY.

While I have power to ask — tell me, Sir, what is your age.

VILLARS.

Twenty-two.

WILLOUGHBY

Receive my thanks, receive my thanks, kind heav'n! — O my boy, my boy! Providence still orders all things for the best, and I am in reality your father.

VILLARS.

O, Sir! bless your son, and assure him he has a father.

Miss WILLOUGHBY, *embracing him.*

My brother my deliverer too! — this is happiness indeed —

Mrs.

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

Let me embrace you too — Your ſiſter will tell you what a mother-in-law I am, and how much ſhe is indebted to my leſſons of propriety. Well! I begin myſelf to think every thing happens for the beſt, after the unexpected good fortune of this morning.

DORMER.

Not to Sir George, I am ſure — for he loſes a good eſtate by this unexpected diſcovery. [*Here Miſs* MONTAGU, *Miſs* DORMER, *Sir* JOHN, *and* DORMER *ſeem congratulating* VILLARS — *ſo does Sir* GEORGE.]

Sir GEORGE.

What, you begin to crow again, do you? — But, let me tell you, I think every accident happens for the beſt, which enables me to do an act of juſtice, and advance the welfare of the deſerving.

Miſs MONTAGU.

Generouſly conſider'd indeed, Sir George — few people, I believe, would give up a fortune ſo eaſily.

Sir GEORGE.

Why, my friend Jack there, if he loſt both an eſtate and a miſtreſs in a couple of hours, wou'd hardly ſet ſo good a face upon matters, notwithſtanding he is much my ſuperior in ſerenity of countenance.

Sir JOHN.

And perhaps, Sir George, even you, may be a conſiderable gainer in the end, if we can but contrive to make an actual comedy of to-day's adventures, by your marriage with a certain lady in this company. [*Looking at Miſs* MONTAGU.]

Sir GEORGE.

And poſſibly that might be yet effected, through your interpoſition, Sir John, with Miſs Montagu.

Miſs MONTAGU.

What? is your denouement to be produc'd at my expence; upon my word, I ſhould be much oblig'd to Sir John's interpoſition for ſuch a purpoſe!

Sir GEORGE.

I ſhou'd at leaſt, Madam — and though I come rather with an ill grace after ſo recent a rejection—

DORMER.

Your affection is not unadulterated now George.

Sir GEORGE.

Why, no — But I hav'nt yet told Miſs Montagu — that death itſelf is infinitely preferable to the idea of offending her — [*ludicrouſly*] though I wou'd readily riſk my life to purchaſe her favourable opinion. [*Turning to her.*]

Miſs MONTAGU.

Well, don't talk to me on this ſubject now, Sir George — You have to be ſure merited much — and you are in every reſpect ſo greatly the oppoſite of my confident ſwain there, who thought I muſt fly into his arms the moment he condeſcended to receive me — that — however, I won't hear a ſyllable from you now — if you can make a tollerable bow to me do, but don't let me hear a ſyllable of nonſenſe, I beg of you.

Sir GEORGE.

This goodneſs —

DORMER.

Didn't the lady ſay ſhe wou'dn't hear a ſyllable of nonſenſe —

Sir GEORGE.

And so you begin to talk to her, do you?

Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

Mighty fine! is it nonsense to make a grateful acknowledgment for the kindness of a lady — What will the men come to at last? —

Sir GEORGE.

So he thinks, Madam—Though Villars [*Aside to Villars*] 'tis a little hard, because Miss Montagu chooses to consult her own happiness, that I am to acknowledge the receipt of an obligation.

Sir JOHN.

My dear Sir George, Miss Montagu has too much discernment not to see the value of so deserving a lover — Address her therefore certain of success, and look securely for happiness according to Mr. Willoughby's principle, because you richly merit it.

WILLOUGHBY.

Right, Sir John — Providence looks down delighted on the actions of the worthy, and, however it may command adversity to frown on the beginning of their days, they will acknowledge with me, that all it's dispensations are full of benignity in the end.

THE END.

# EPILOGUE.

## SPOKEN BY MRS. BARRY.

MODISH divines, at court and in the city,
Are in their pulpits hum'rous, gay, and witty ——
They've now chang'd hands, the ſtage and pulpit teaching,
Sermons are plays, and plays are merely preaching ——
*A Word to the Wife*, a pretty pert adviſer! ——
As if 'twere poſſible to make you wiſer:
Yet as each here, may think the Poet labours
Not to teach him, but to inſtruct his neighbours;
As the bright regents of that ſplendid row
Sneer on the pit, for beings much below;
And theſe in turn, as things in order move,
Toſs up the ſneer to thoſe who mount above:
The gods look down, and let *their* pity fall
On front, ſide, green, ſtage-boxes, pit, and all.
Let me, before your carriages appear,
Breathe one ſhort word, ye wiſe ones, in your ear.
You, ſtop your chairs, *(to the ſide-boxes)* your hacks, *(to the pit)*
won't run away;
And ladies, *(to the gallery)* put not on your pattins pray:
And firſt, ye ſoft, ye ſweet romantic maids,
Who die for purling ſtreams, and ſylvan ſhades,
And think for better and for worſe, to take
The beſt of huſbands, in a darling rake;
Who brings a ſhatter'd fortune to the fair,
With mind and body wanting vaſt repair;

Shall

# EPILOGUE.

Shall I for once your tender thoughts reveal?
'Tis fine to hear him ſwear, to ſee him kneel;
His tongue with worn-out extacies will run,
'Till he has triumph'd, 'till the wife's undone;
And then that tender ſtrain, ſo love-creating,
Turns to, "Death, Madam, hold your curſed prating,—
"You quite diſtract me — prithee farther ſtand——
"I won't be teaz'd — Zounds, take away your hand —"
This is a ſad change, ladies, but 'tis common,
Man will be man, and woman will be woman;
For Villars is a phœnix, where's his brother?
'Twill take a hundred years to find another.
Yet you, ye Sires, whom time ſhould render wiſe,
You act as if each moment it could riſe;
Forgetting all, what you yourſelves have been,
You truſt your girls with Dormers at fifteen;
Throw your poor lambkins in the tyger's way,
Then ſtare to find a rake — a beaſt of prey.
Learn prudence here — and, O! you precious blades,
Whether cockaded, or without cockades;
Whether haranguing for the public good,
You ſhake St. Stephens — or the Robinhood ——
Who ring our charms for ever in our ears,
Yet inly triumph at a virgin's tears;
Be now convinc'd — the libertine diſclaim,
And live to honour, if not dead to ſhame.
What is the plaudit of a fool when mellow,
Roaring in raptures, *a damn'd honeſt fellow?*
Will that repay you for the boſom ſtings?
*Damn'd honeſt fellows*, oft are worthleſs things ——
But I'll ſtop here, I will not ſermonize ——
A fooliſh woman can't inſtruct the wiſe.